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OLD HOME WEEK

JAMES BALL NAYLOR

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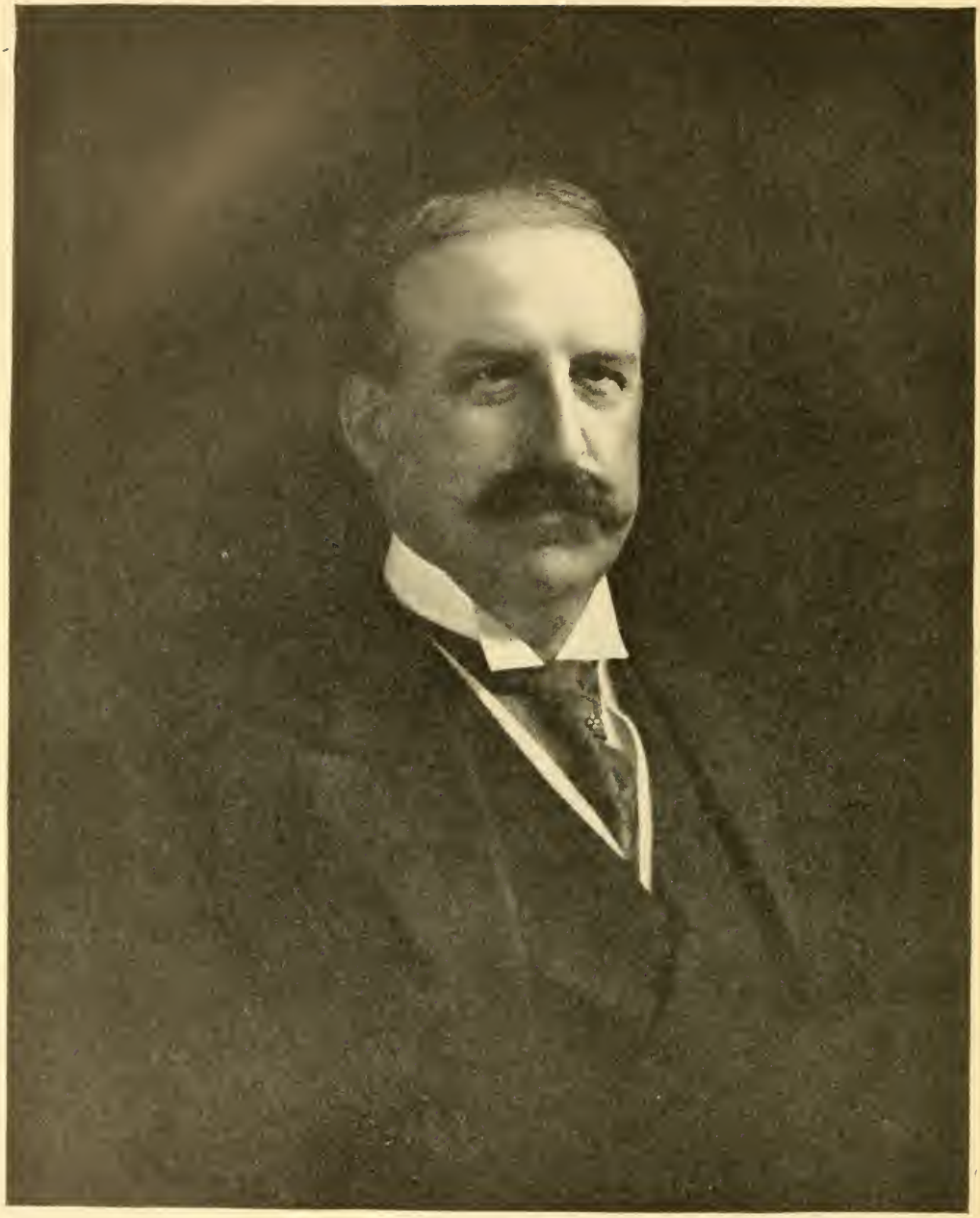
THE OLD HOME

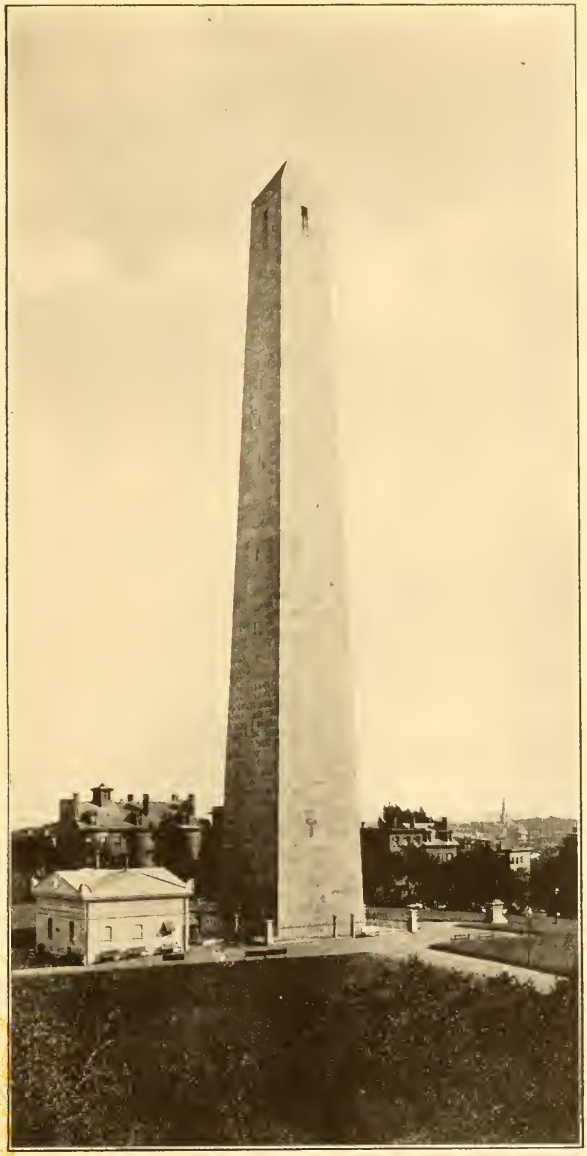


J. W. Rollins

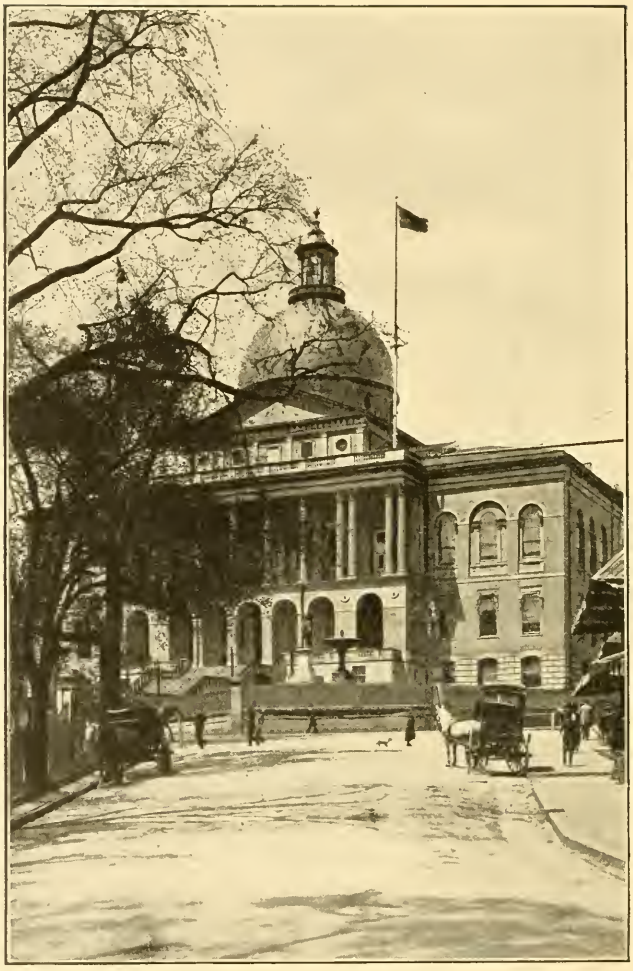
EX-GOVERNOR OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
FOUNDER OF OLD HOME WEEK

OLD HOME WEEK

HOME OF EX-GOVERNOR F. W. ROLLINS, CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE



BUNKER HILL MONUMENT



THE STATE HOUSE, BOSTON

OLD HOME WEEK

JAMES BALL NAYLOR

ILLUSTRATIONS
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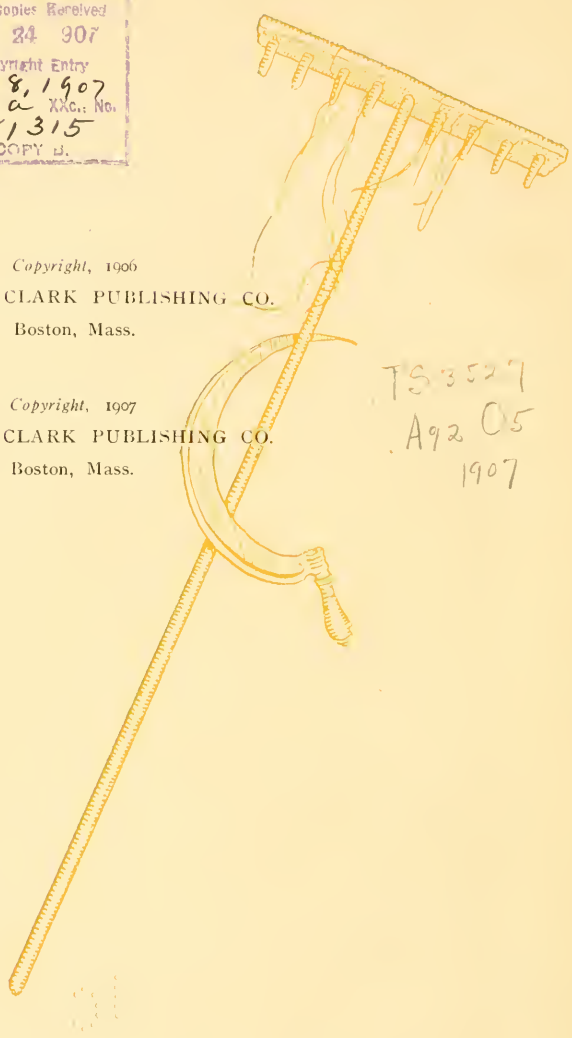

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DEDICATION

To a sunburnt rogue of the Barefoot Tribe,
Who knew every scene that I here describe,-
Every sunny glade, every shady nook!-
I dedicate this little book;
To a brave of the Barefoot Tribe of Glee—
To the Little Boy that I used to Be!

James Ball Naylor

MALTA, OHIO,
Sept. 25, '06.

OLD STATE HOUSE, BOSTON

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SWAN BOATS, PUBLIC GARDEN, BOSTON

FOREWORD

The mist of the morn – and the red orb of day;
The old-home shore and your boyhood bay!

You up with the anchor and gallantly ride
Afar and away on the glistering tide;
But ever there comes like a tremulous hail,–
On the breath of the calm, in the teeth of the gale,–
Rising clear o'er the wide waters' silence or roar,
The sound of a song on the old-home shore.

The glare of the noonday – and burning sand;
And a busy mart on a foreign strand!

You buffet the billows of dust and heat,
And you wrestle with men on the crowded street;
But there comes as you jostle your way along
In the midst of the sweltering unwashed throng,–
Like incense you knew in the days of yore,–
The faint smell of flowers on the old-home shore.

The dusk of the eve – and the sea below;
And the sky above, and the afterglow!

As you saunter on deck lost in thought profound,
You whistle a tune of the homeward bound;
But, again and again, you lift your eyes
Toward the darkling west where your best hope lies–
Where a few soft rays come shimmering o'er
The waves, from a light on the old-home shore.

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH, BOSTON

TRINITY CHURCH, COPLEY SQUARE, BOSTON

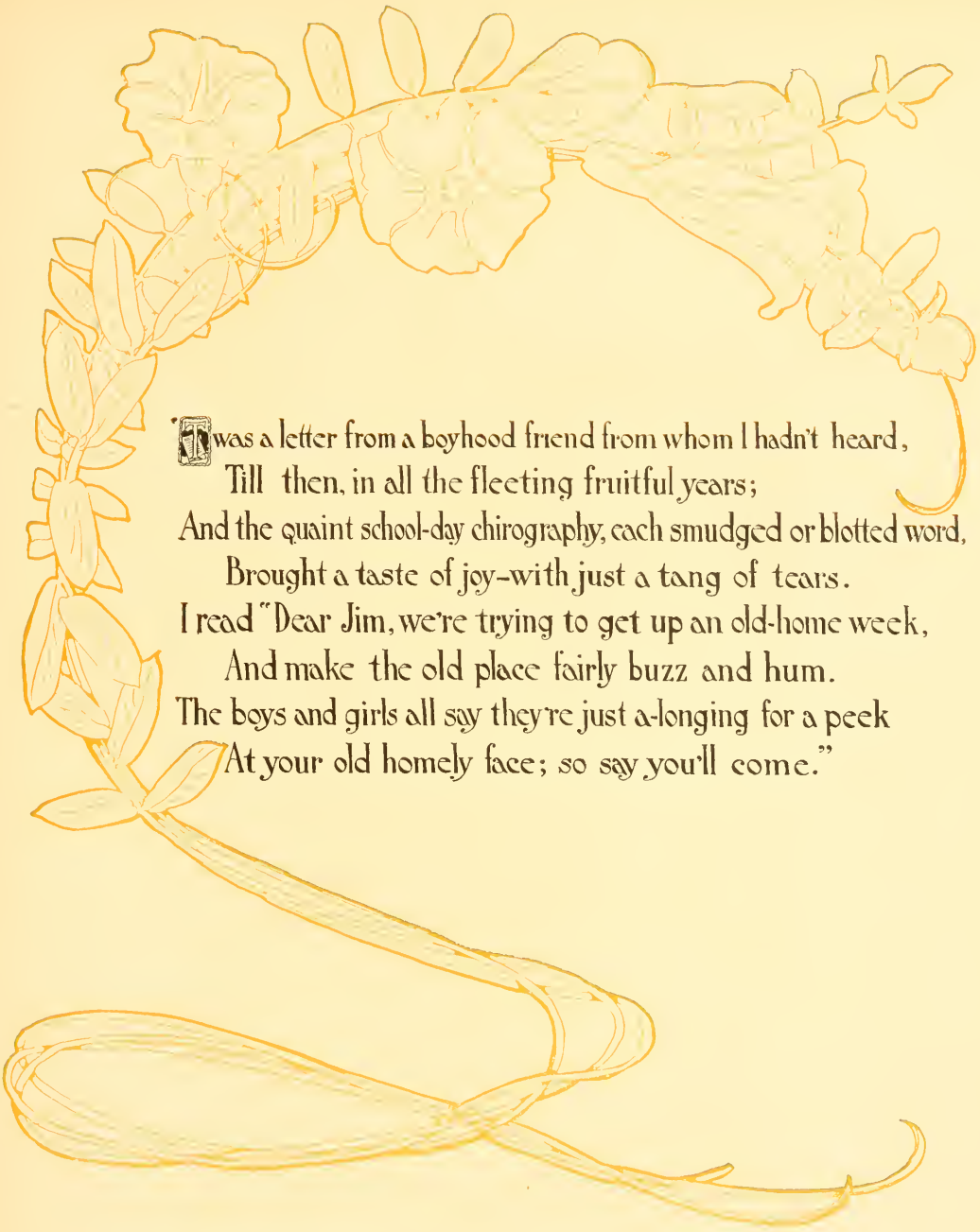
GRANARY BURYING GROUND — PARK STREET CHURCH IN THE DISTANCE — BOSTON

"I WAS SITTING IN MY OFFICE,"—

FROG POND, BOSTON COMMON

I was sitting in my office,- far above the busy street
Where the laden barks of business come and go,
Where the rushing streams of traffic swirl and mingle as they meet
And the surging tides of commerce ebb and flow,-
Dimly conscious of full many sounds-the city's swash and foam,
But unmindful of the import they might bring;
I was poring o'er a letter from a schoolmate 'way back home-
And drinking from the dipper at the spring!

KING'S CHAPEL AND BURYING GROUND (1630), BOSTON



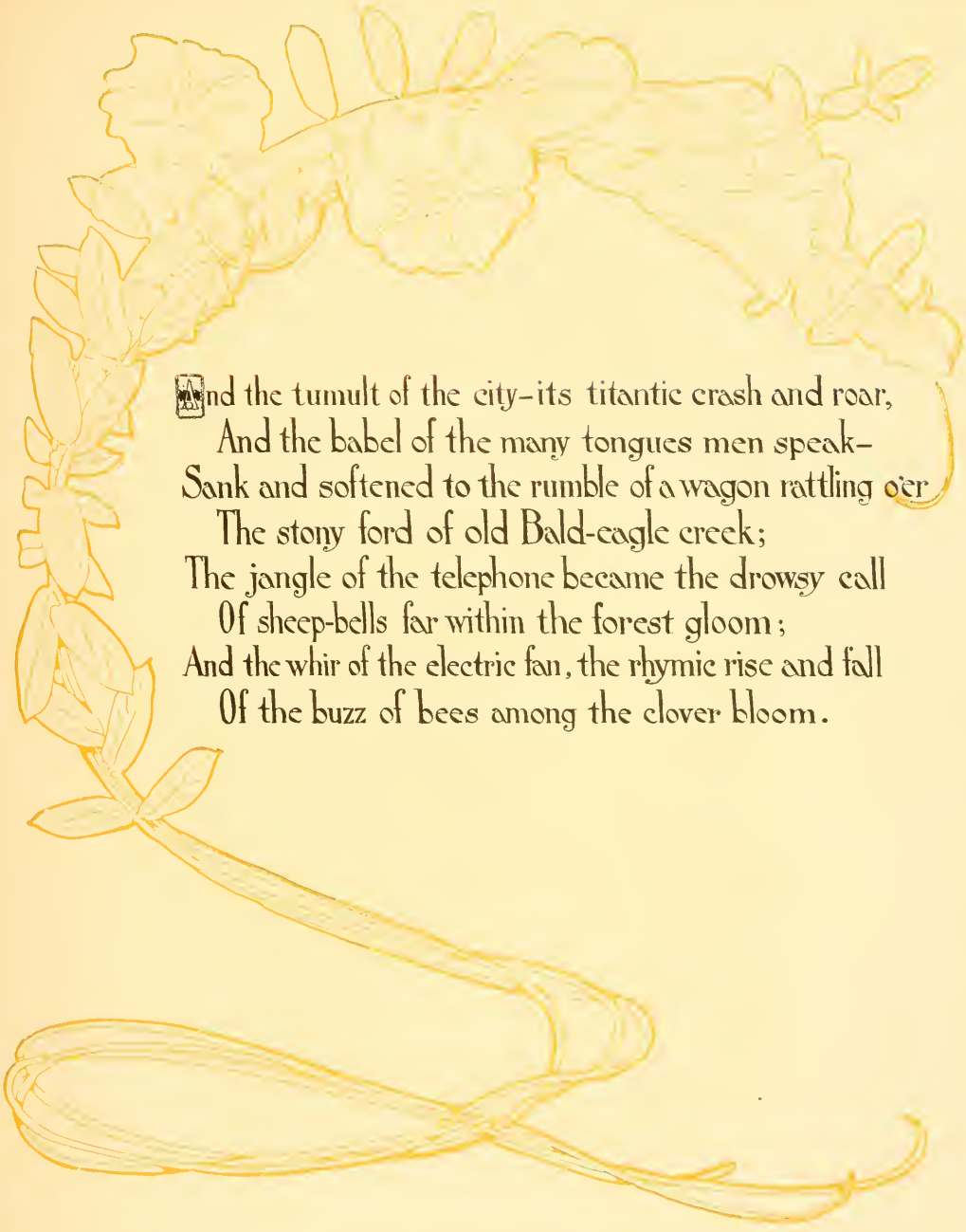
'Twas a letter from a boyhood friend from whom I hadn't heard,
Till then, in all the fleeting fruitful years;
And the quaint school-day chirography, each smudged or blotted word,
Brought a taste of joy-with just a tang of tears.
I read "Dear Jim, we're trying to get up an old-home week,
And make the old place fairly buzz and hum.
The boys and girls all say they're just a-longing for a peek
At your old homely face; so say you'll come."

The load of years slipped from my sagging shoulders, and again
A lad was I back in the old abode;
And I whistled up and down the room as merrily as then
I whistled up and down the country road.
The freighted day became a dream—a bright dream of the days
When held in thrall by Nature's potent charm
And shackled with the clinging vines of dewy woodland ways,
I knew the mystic rapture of the farm.

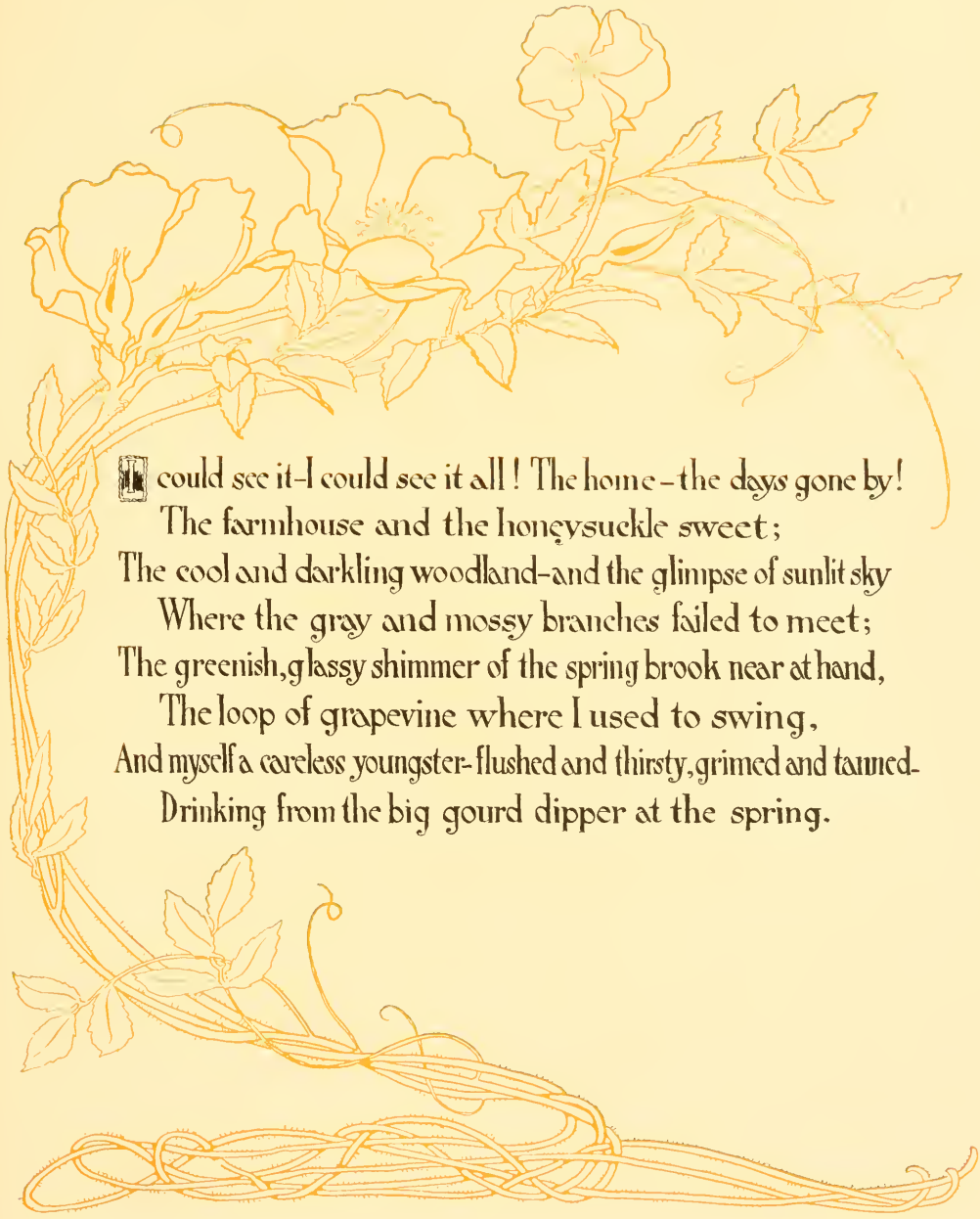
THE LOUISE M. ALCOTT HOUSE, CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS

"THE JANGLE OF THE TELEPHONE BELL"—

HARVARD COLLEGE GATE, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS



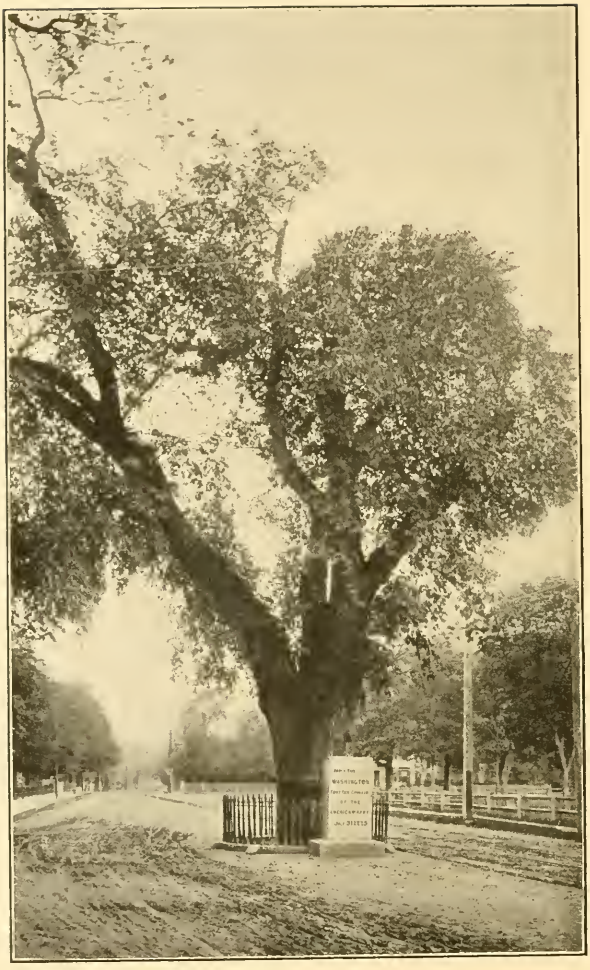
And the tumult of the city–its titantic crash and roar,
And the babel of the many tongues men speak–
Sank and softened to the rumble of a wagon rattling o'er
The stony ford of old Bald-eagle creek;
The jangle of the telephone became the drowsy call
Of sheep-bells far within the forest gloom;
And the whir of the electric fan, the rhymic rise and fall
Of the buzz of bees among the clover bloom.



I could see it–I could see it all! The home–the days gone by!
The farmhouse and the honeysuckle sweet;
The cool and darkling woodland–and the glimpse of sunlit sky
Where the gray and mossy branches failed to meet;
The greenish, glassy shimmer of the spring brook near at hand,
The loop of grapevine where I used to swing,
And myself a careless youngster–flushed and thirsty, grimed and tanned–
Drinking from the big gourd dipper at the spring.

OLD NORTH CHURCH, BOSTON

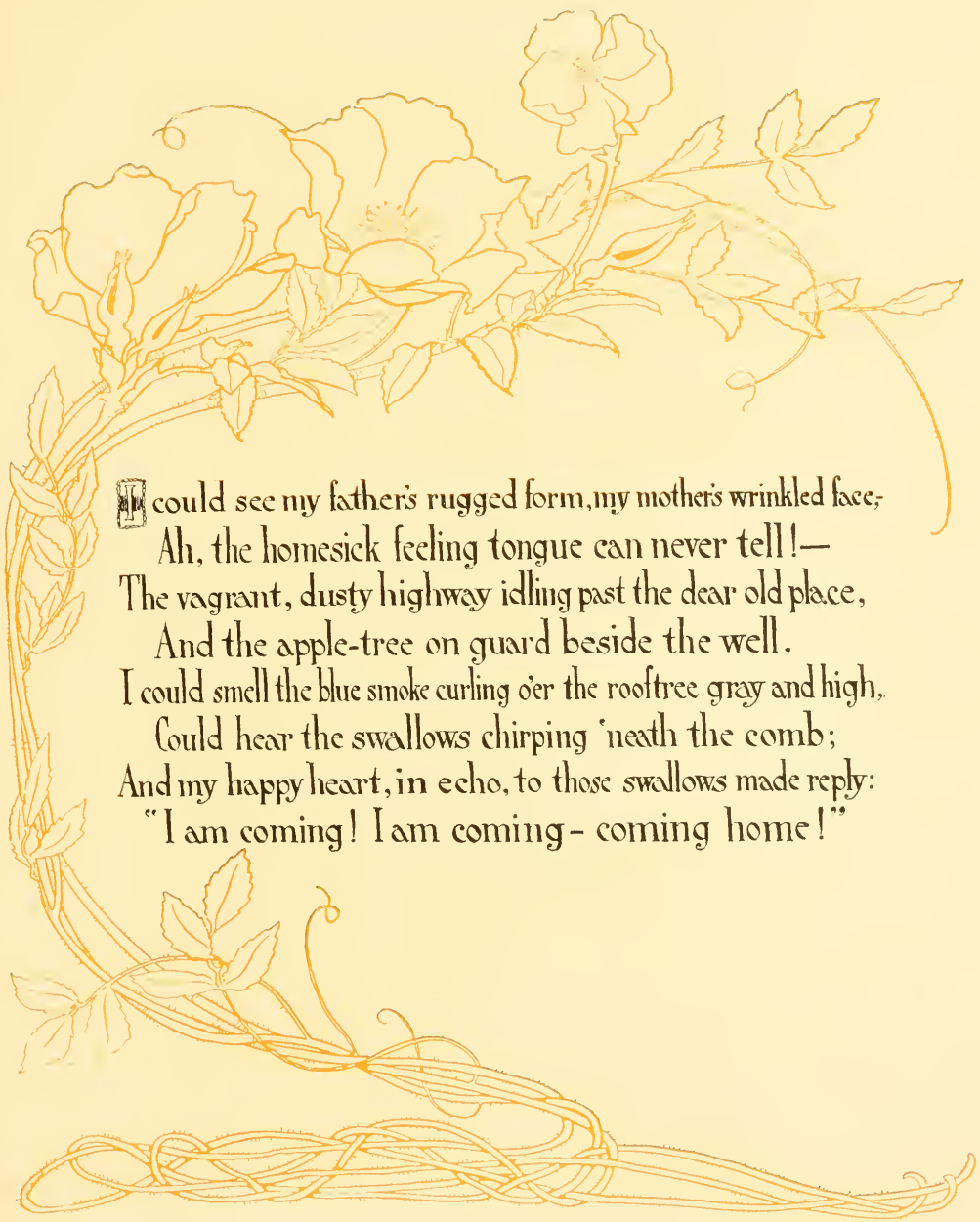
I could hear the bob-white's whistle in the field of waving grain,
And the robin's cheery lilt within the shade
Of the orchard on the hillside; and far down the leafy lane,
The cries of barefoot comrades in the glade.
And-my soul a-thirst!-I hankered for the dipper at the spring,
My playmates, and the hills we used to roam;
And in fancy I could hear a boyhood chorus softly sing:
"He is coming! He is coming-coming home!"



WASHINGTON ELM, CAMBRIDGE

"I WENT SPEEDING TOWARD THE LOYAL LAND OF JOY"—

RALPH WALDO EMERSON'S HOME, CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS



I could see my father's rugged form, my mother's wrinkled face;
Ah, the homesick feeling tongue can never tell!—
The vagrant, dusty highway idling past the dear old place,
And the apple-tree on guard beside the well.
I could smell the blue smoke curling o'er the rooftree gray and high,
Could hear the swallows chirping 'neath the comb;
And my happy heart, in echo, to those swallows made reply:
"I am coming! I am coming – coming home!"

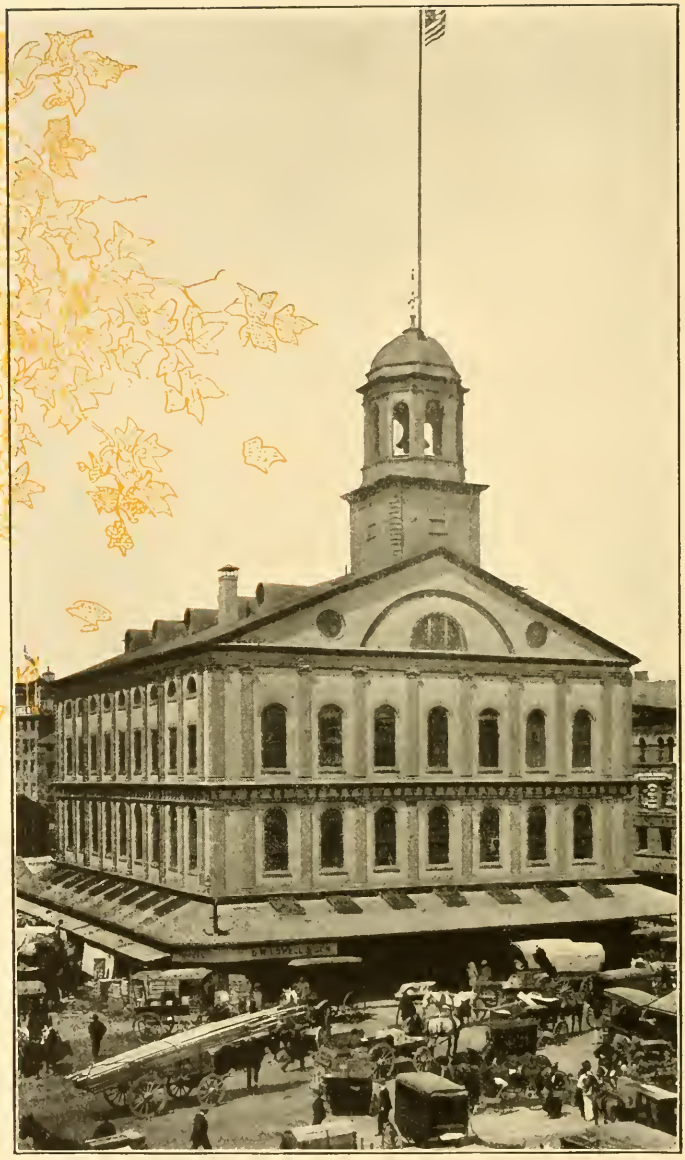
OLD SOUTH MEETING HOUSE, BOSTON

PART SECOND.

With the gleaming road ahead of me, the teeming town behind;
And my thoughts the wayward fancies of a boy!—
With the rule of gold forgotten and the Golden Rule in mind,
I went speeding toward the loyal Land of Joy.
The many miles dropped out of sight, as had the many years
Since I abandoned subjects, crown and throne;
But the blue sky's smile of sunshine and the brown earth's dewdrop tears
Bade me welcome to a kingdom still my own.

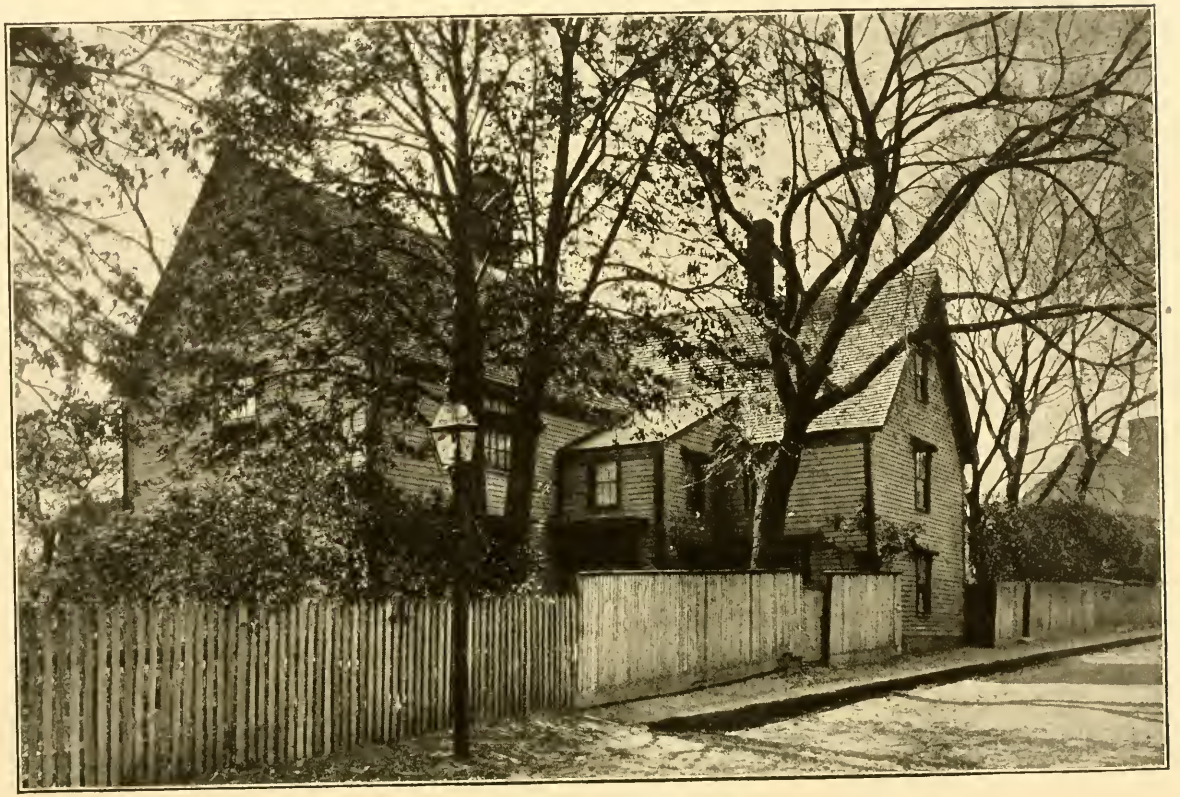
F.V.E.

I thought to slip into the sleepy villiage, and depart
For the cottage of my boyhood and my birth—
Just to spend one evening worshiping and talking heart to heart
With my parents, at the fondest shrine on earth;
But my friends were at the station, kindly faces all aglow,
With madly waving banners and a band,—
Those grown up lads and lassies of the blissful long-ago!-
And the nearest and the dearest took my hand.

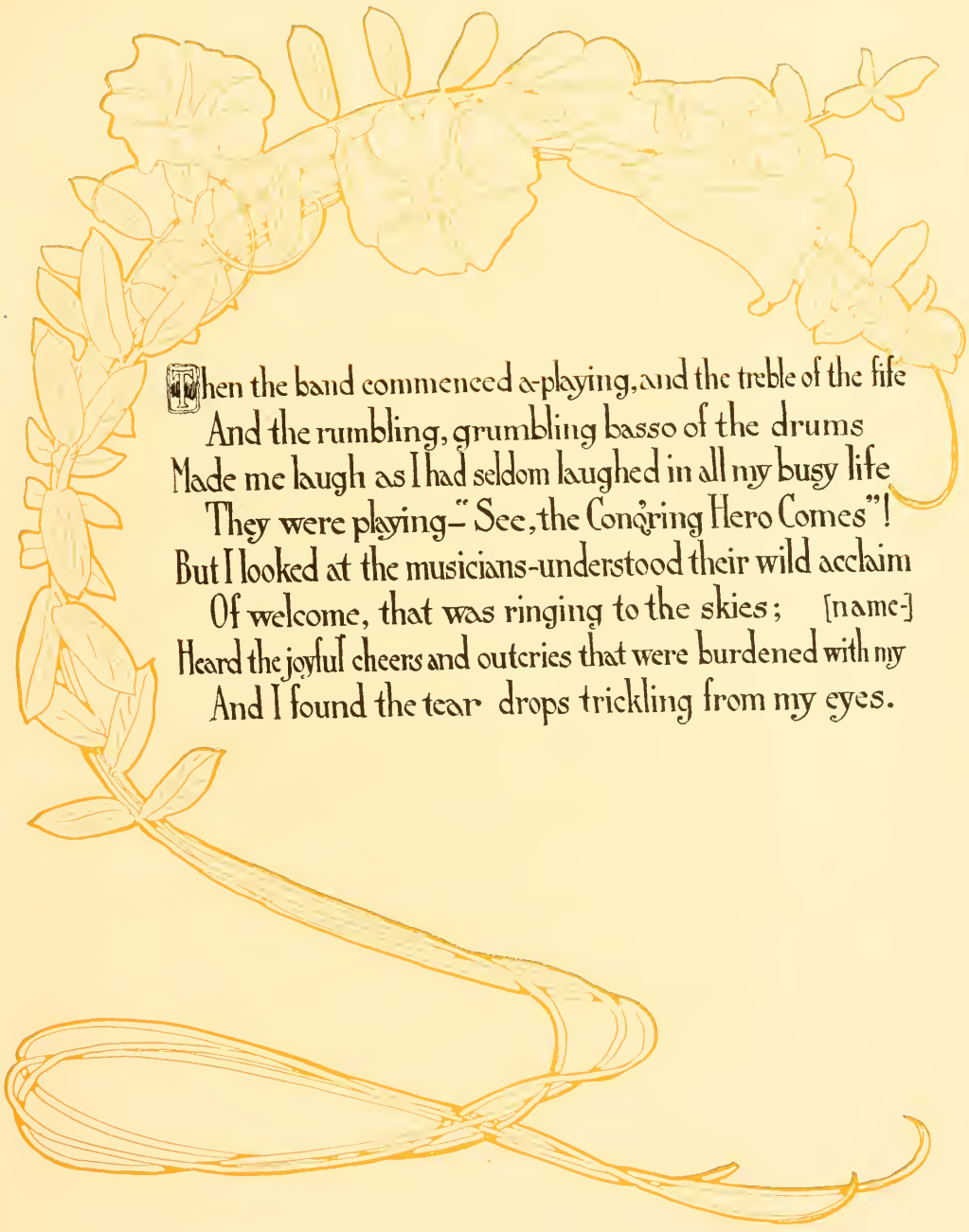


FANEUIL HALL, BOSTON

"THE NEAREST AND DEAREST TOOK MY HAND"



HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES, SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS



When the band commenced a-playing, and the treble of the fife
And the rumbling, grumbling basso of the drums
Made me laugh as I had seldom laughed in all my busy life
They were playing—"See, the Conq'ring Hero Comes"!
But I looked at the musicians-understood their wild acclaim
Of welcome, that was ringing to the skies; [name-]
Heard the joyful cheers and outcries that were burdened with my
And I found the tear drops trickling from my eyes.

There they were to meet and greet me,-those dear chums of other days!-
Older, graver, bent with work and worldly care;
Badly marred in many features, sadly changed in many ways–
Lacking grace of limb and sorely scant of hair.
But I knew them–oh, I knew them! Knew each girlish trick and trait–
Remnants of the merry coquetry of yore;
And recognized each impish grin, each boyish move and gait–
And loved them as I never had before!

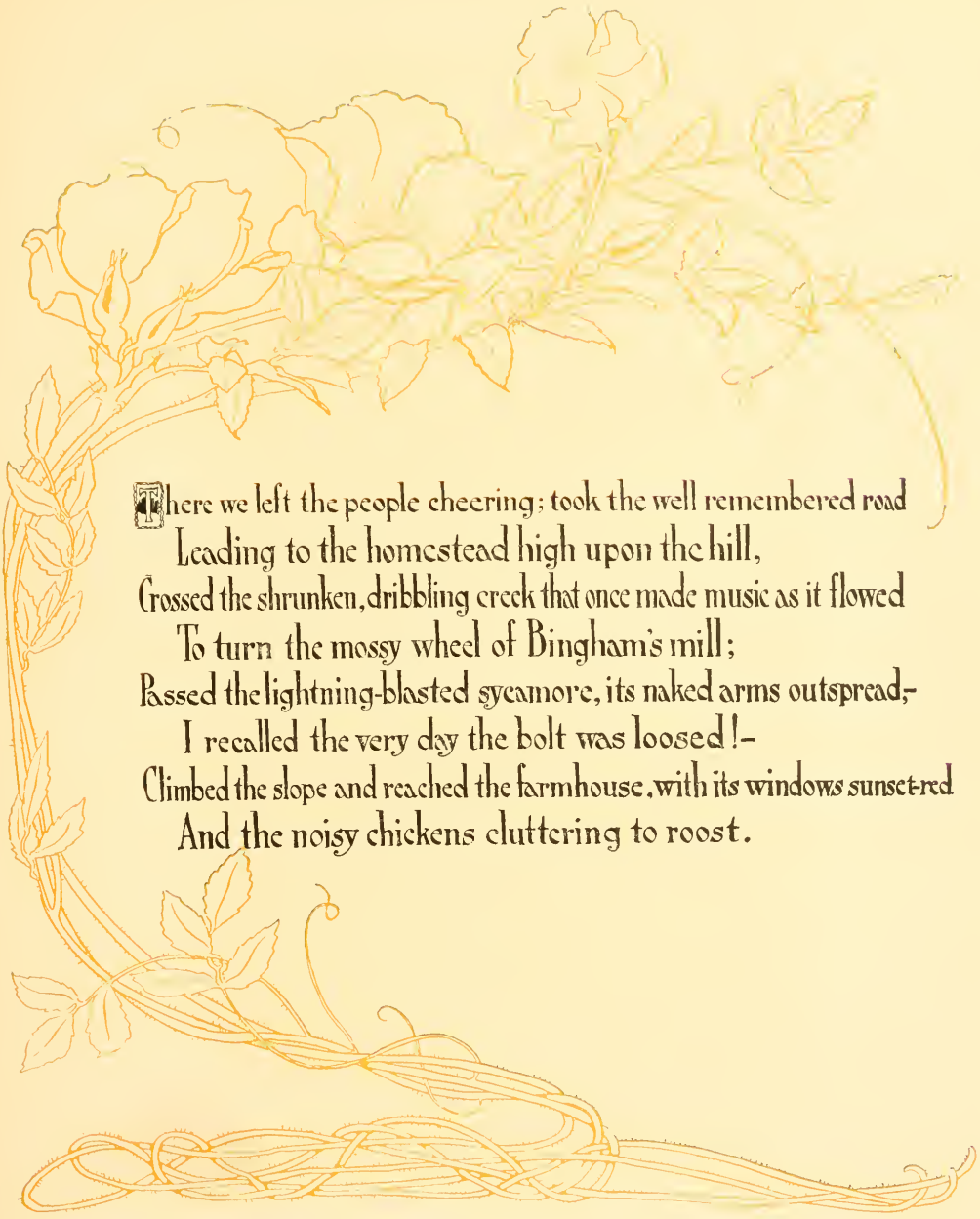
BATTLEGROUND, MONUMENT AND BRIDGE, CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS

But, ah! I saw an aged pair—their eyes alight with pride,
Their countenances bright with love and joy!—
Hesitatingly advancing, hand in hand and side by side;
And I caught their murmured words: "My son!"—"My boy!"
Father!-Mother! Halt of speech were they, and quaintly, oddly dressed-
But I loved the very ground they trod upon;
And I sprang and caught them in my arms, and strained them to my breast-
As each had held *me* oft in years agone!

MINUTE MAN, CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS

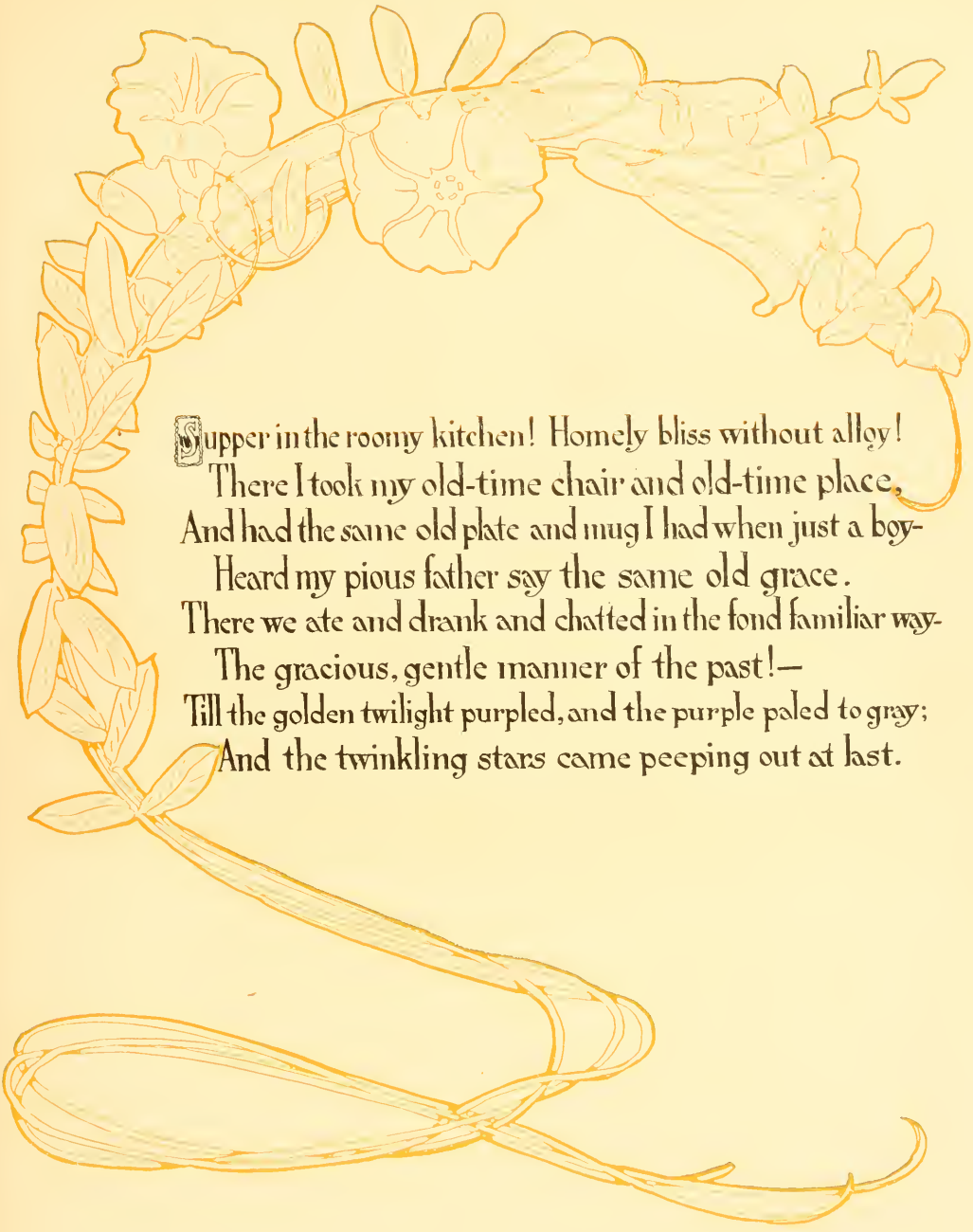
"THERE WE ATE AND DRANK AND CHATTED"—

THE AGNES SURRIAGE WELL, MARBLEHEAD, MASSACHUSETTS



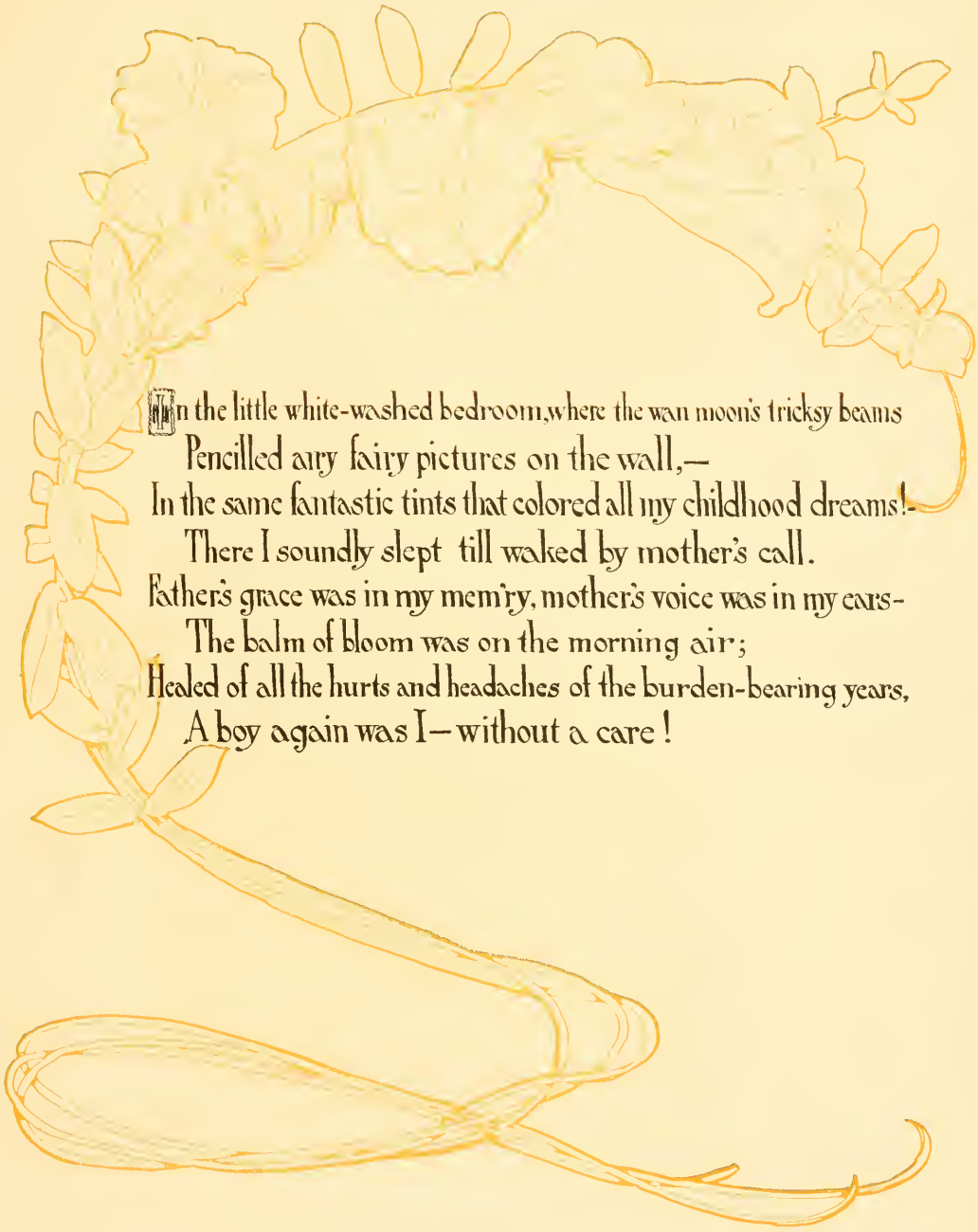
There we left the people cheering; took the well remembered road
Leading to the homestead high upon the hill,
Crossed the shrunken, dribbling creek that once made music as it flowed
To turn the mossy wheel of Bingham's mill;
Passed the lightning-blasted sycamore, its naked arms outspread,–
I recalled the very day the bolt was loosed!–
Climbed the slope and reached the farmhouse, with its windows sunset-red
And the noisy chickens cluttering to roost.

HOME OF HARRIET BEECHER STOWE, AUTHOR OF "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN,"
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT



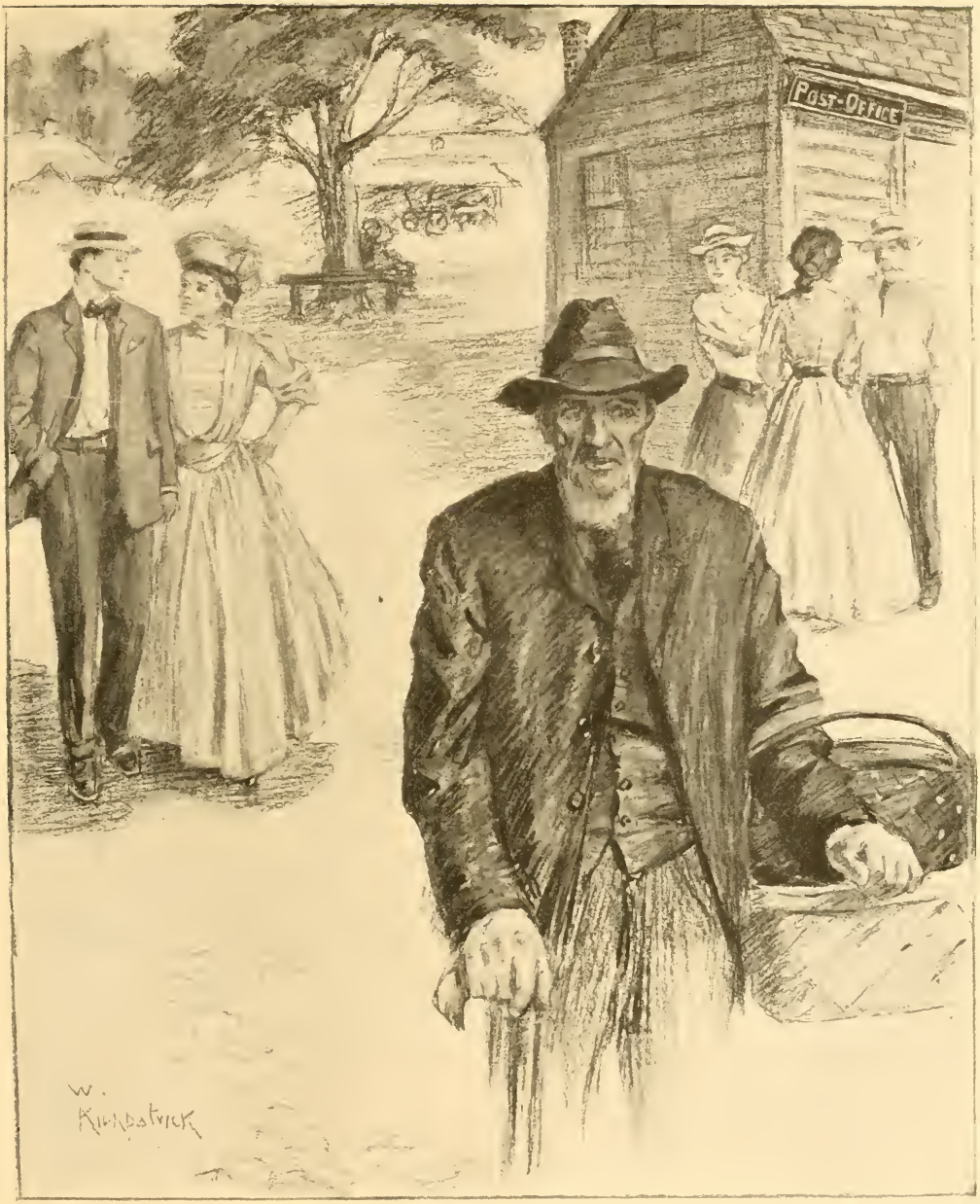
Supper in the roomy kitchen! Homely bliss without alloy!
There I took my old-time chair and old-time place,
And had the same old plate and mug I had when just a boy-
Heard my pious father say the same old grace.
There we ate and drank and chatted in the fond familiar way-
The gracious, gentle manner of the past!—
Till the golden twilight purpled, and the purple paled to gray;
And the twinkling stars came peeping out at last.

OLD WINTHROP MILL, NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT

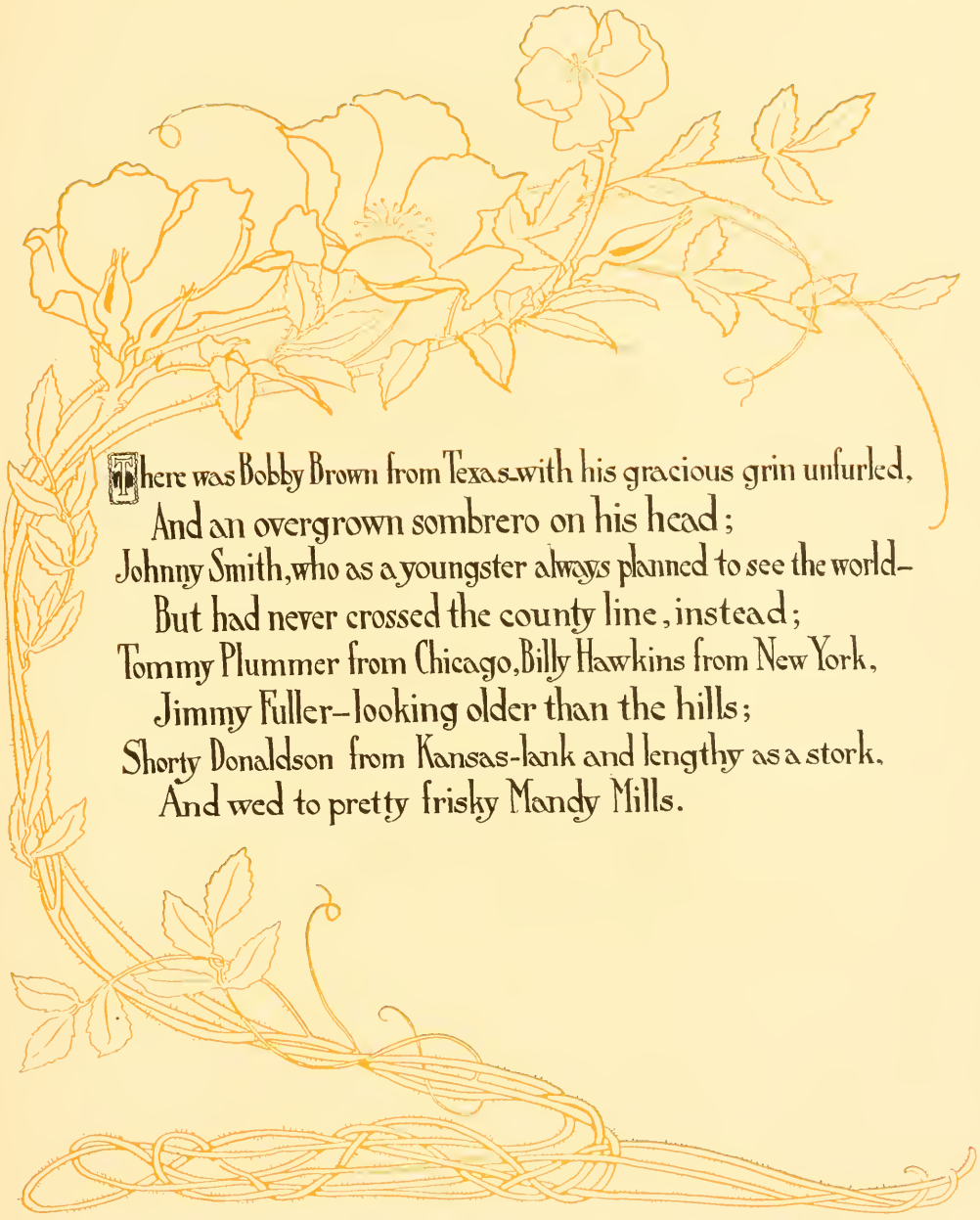


In the little white-washed bedroom, where the wan moon's tricksy beams
Pencilled airy fairy pictures on the wall,—
In the same fantastic tints that colored all my childhood dreams!—
There I soundly slept till waked by mother's call.
Father's grace was in my mem'ry, mother's voice was in my ears—
The balm of bloom was on the morning air;
Healed of all the hurts and headaches of the burden-bearing years,
A boy again was I—without a care!

OLD CHAIN BRIDGE, NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS
FIRST SUSPENSION BRIDGE IN AMERICA

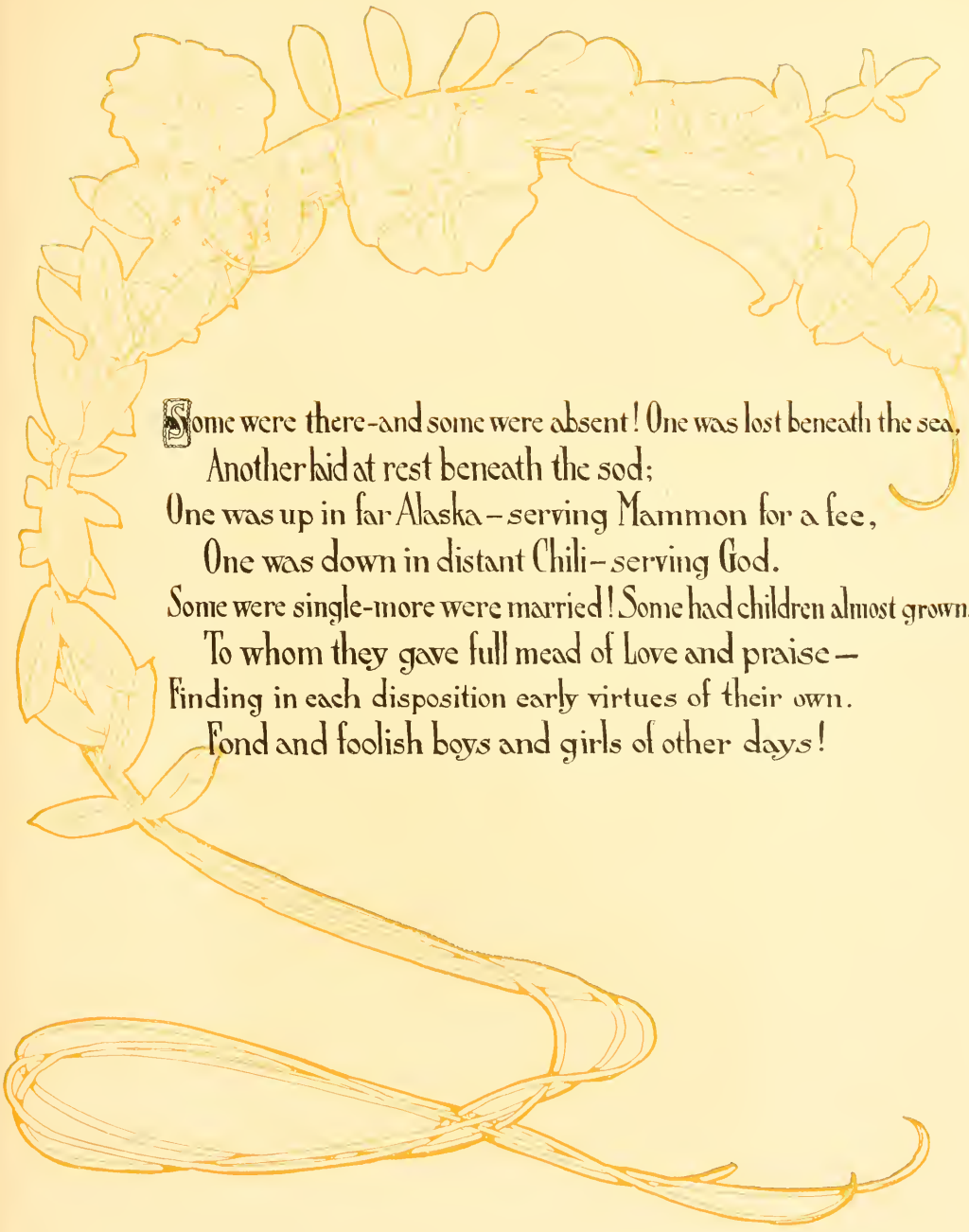


"ROAMING ROUND OLD CLOVERTOWN"—



There was Bobby Brown from Texas-with his gracious grin unfurled,
And an overgrown sombrero on his head;
Johnny Smith, who as a youngster always planned to see the world–
But had never crossed the county line, instead;
Tommy Plummer from Chicago, Billy Hawkins from New York,
Jimmy Fuller–looking older than the hills;
Shorty Donaldson from Kansas-lank and lengthy as a stork,
And wed to pretty frisky Mandy Mills.

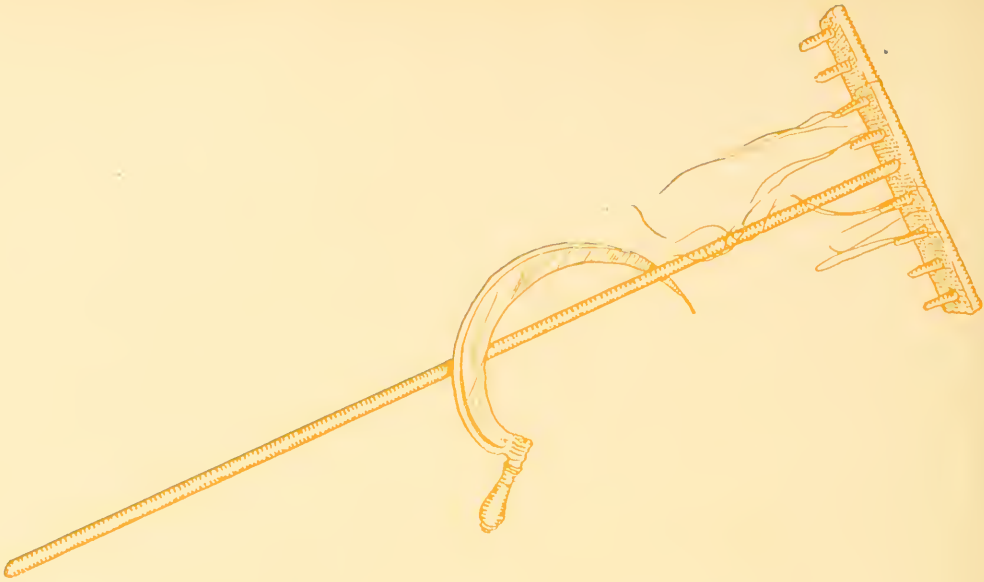
"OLD MAN IN THE MOUNTAIN"
WHITE MOUNTAINS, NEW HAMPSHIRE



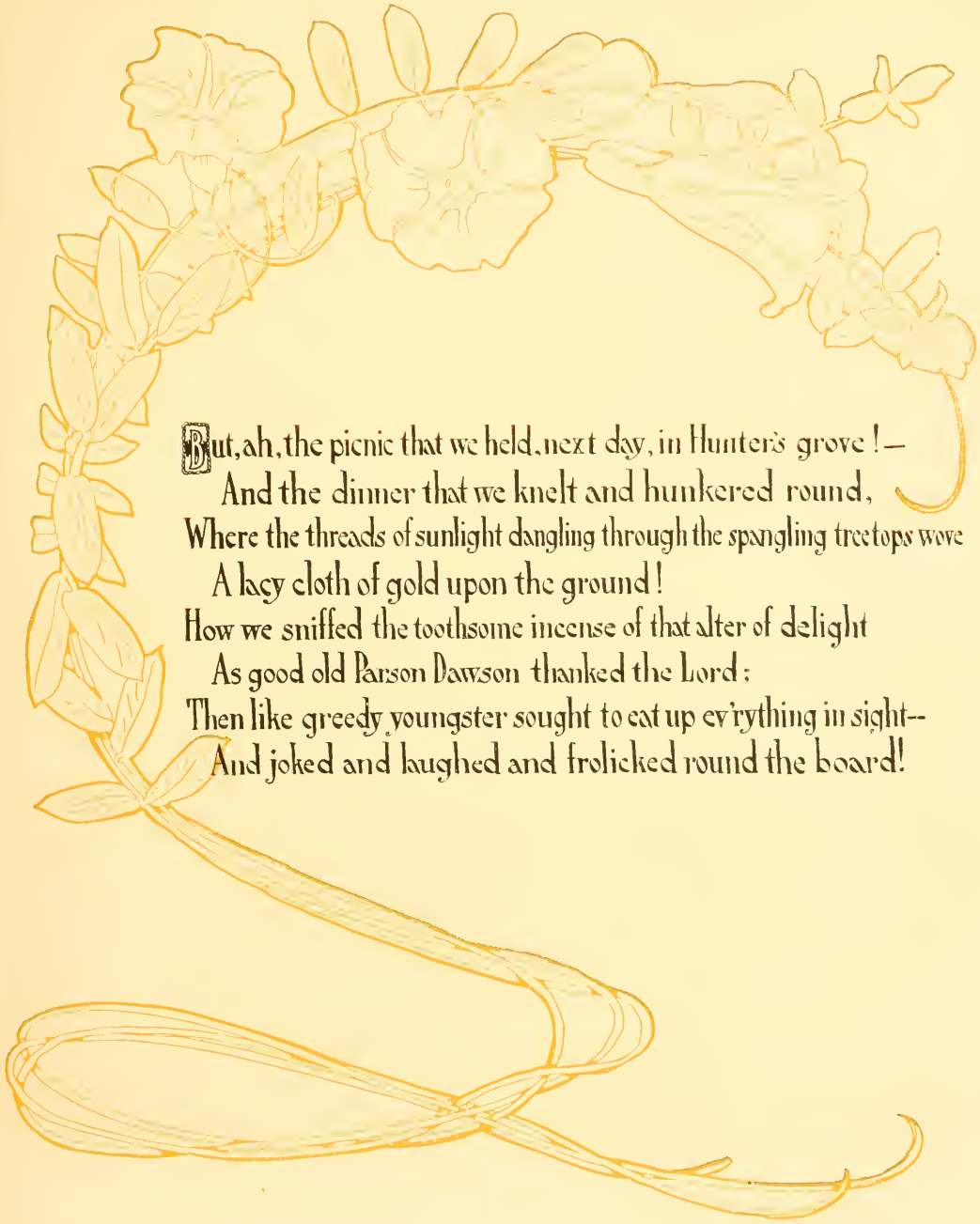
Some were there-and some were absent! One was lost beneath the sea,
Another kid at rest beneath the sod;
One was up in far Alaska – serving Mammon for a fee,
One was down in distant Chili – serving God.
Some were single-more were married! Some had children almost grown,
To whom they gave full mead of Love and praise –
Finding in each disposition early virtues of their own.
Fond and foolish boys and girls of other days!

OLD PEPPERELL HOUSE, KITTERY POINT, MAINE

"THE QUIET LITTLE CHURCHYARD"

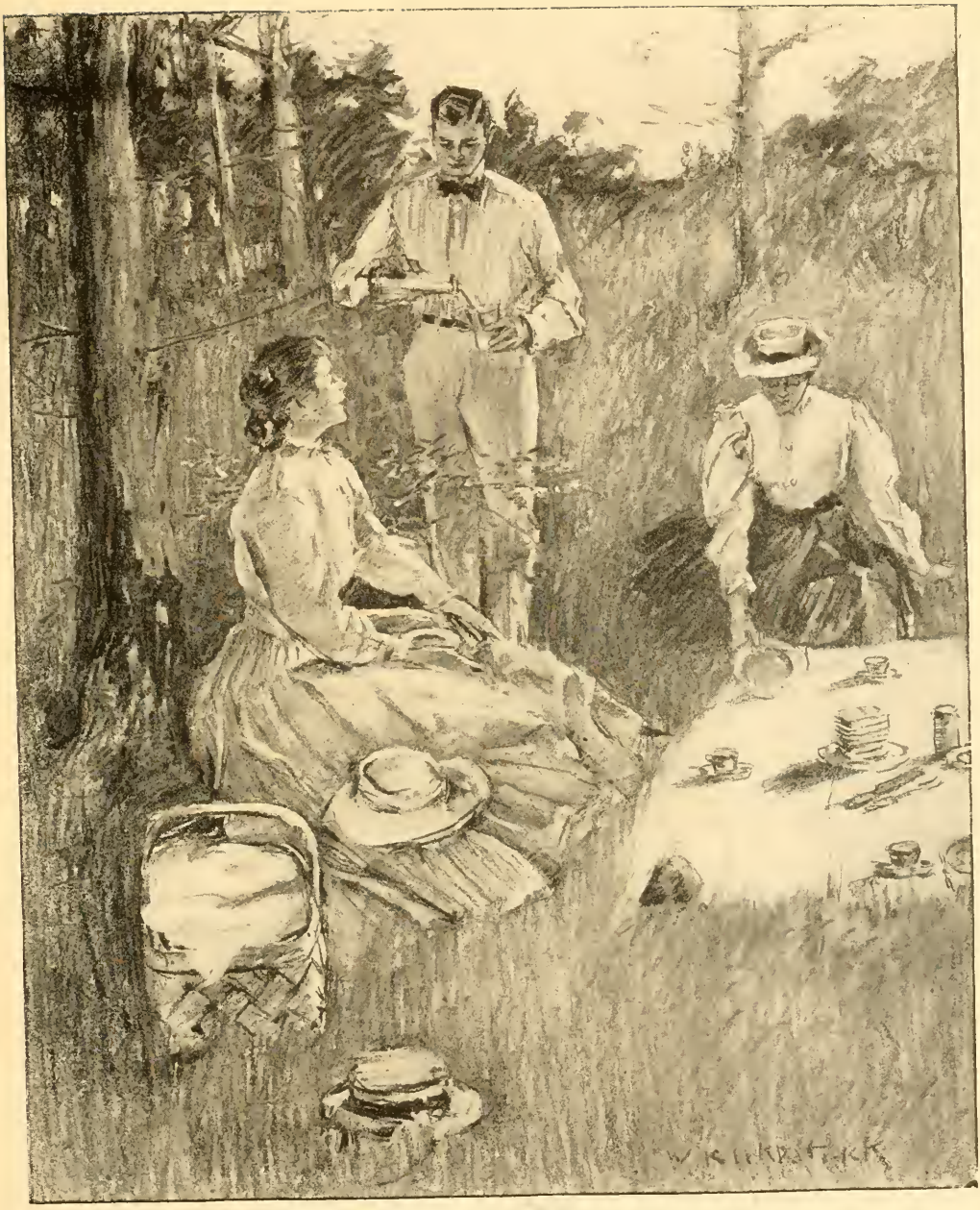


HARBOR SCENE, GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

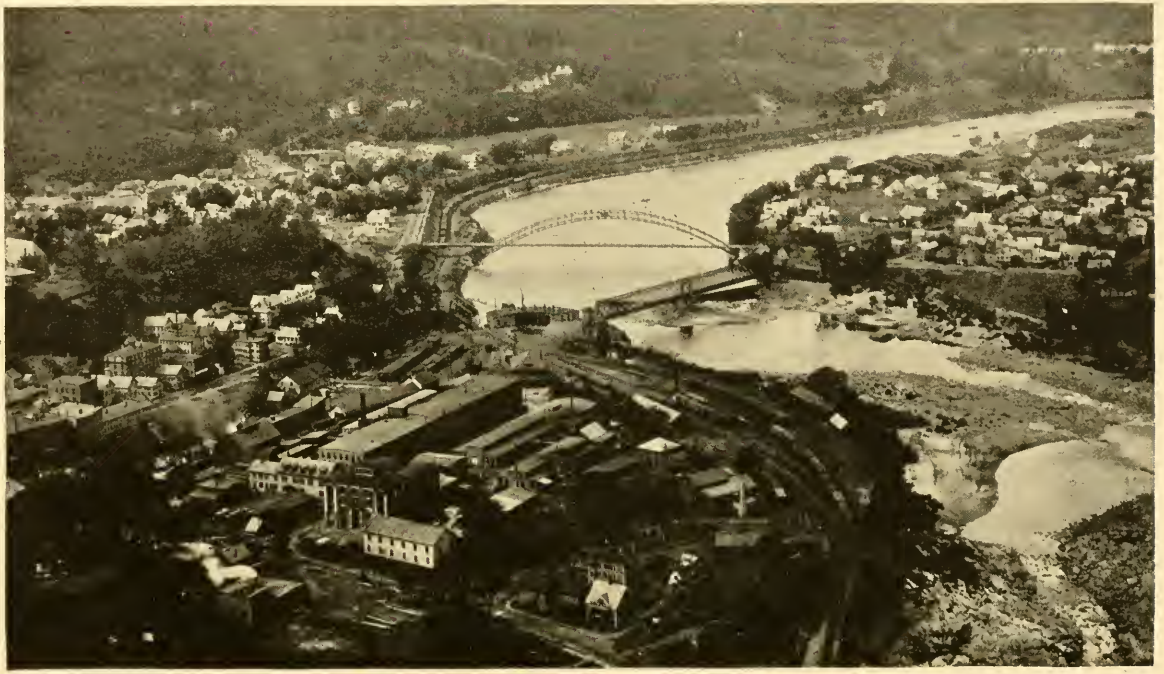


But, ah, the picnic that we held, next day, in Hunter's grove!—
And the dinner that we knelt and hunkered round,
Where the threads of sunlight dangling through the spangling treetops wove
A lacy cloth of gold upon the ground!
How we sniffed the toothsome incense of that alter of delight
As good old Parson Dawson thanked the Lord;
Then like greedy youngster sought to eat up ev'rything in sight--
And joked and laughed and frolicked round the board!

"THE GREEN" WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT



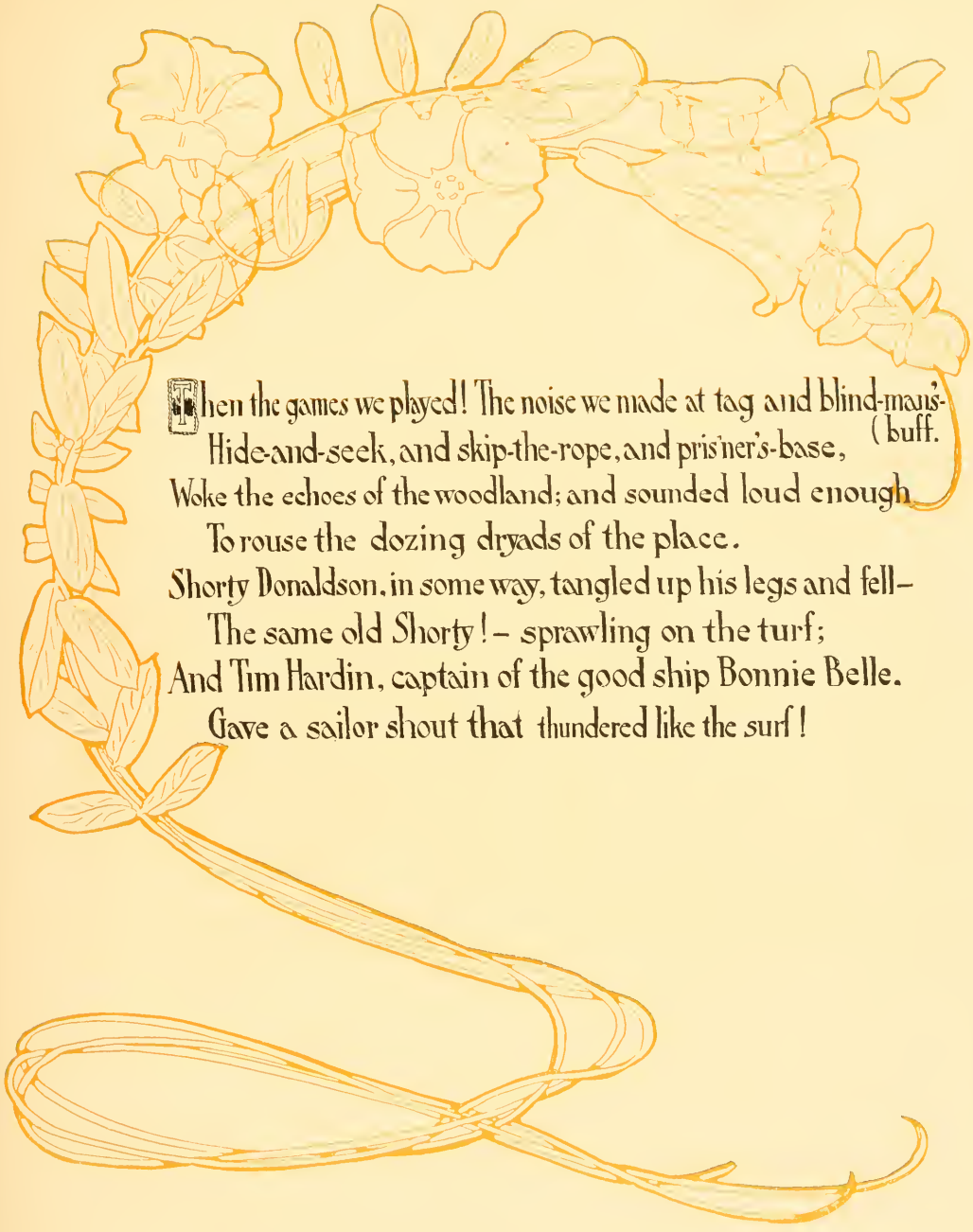
"WOKE THE ECHOES OF THE WOODLAND"



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW, BELLOWS FALLS, VERMONT

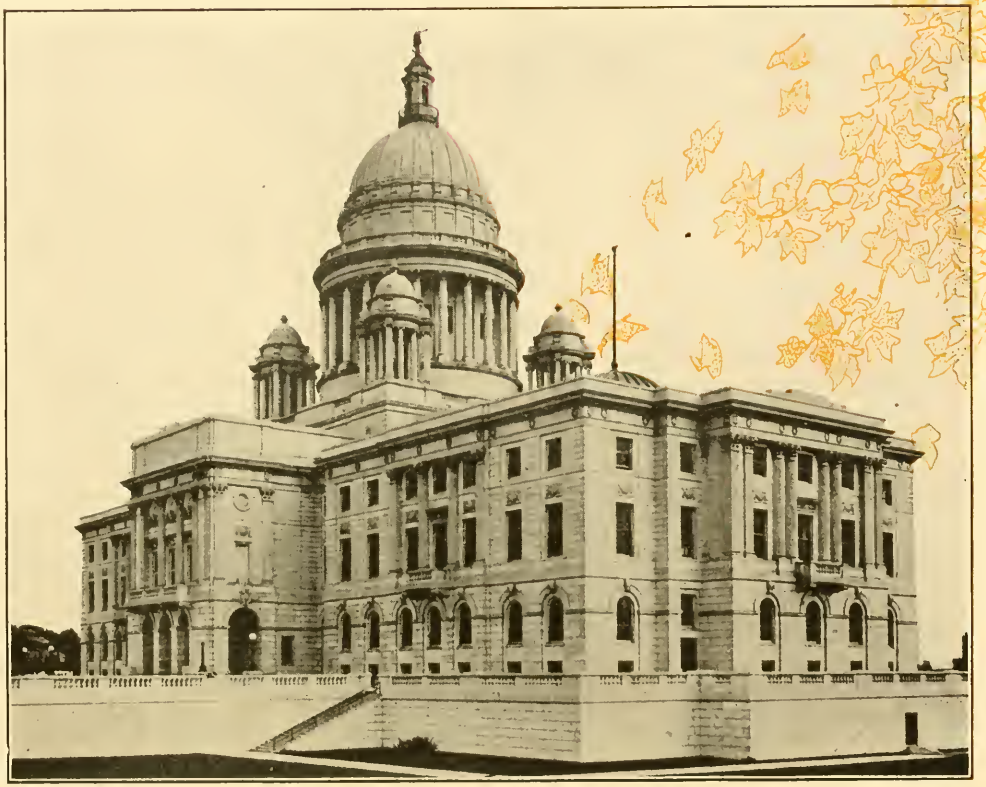
There were lakes and streams of milk and cream, and tablelands of cake—
There were spouting coffee-geysers, steaming-hot;
That fragrant amber drink was just like mother used to make—
For she was there and made it on the spot!
There were mountain-peaks of chicken and extensive plains of pie,
Hills of luscious bread-and-butter, vales of fruit;
'Twas a goodly land of plenty smiling 'neath the summer sky—
And we were wild marauders after loot!

YALE COLLEGE, VANDERBILT HALL, NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

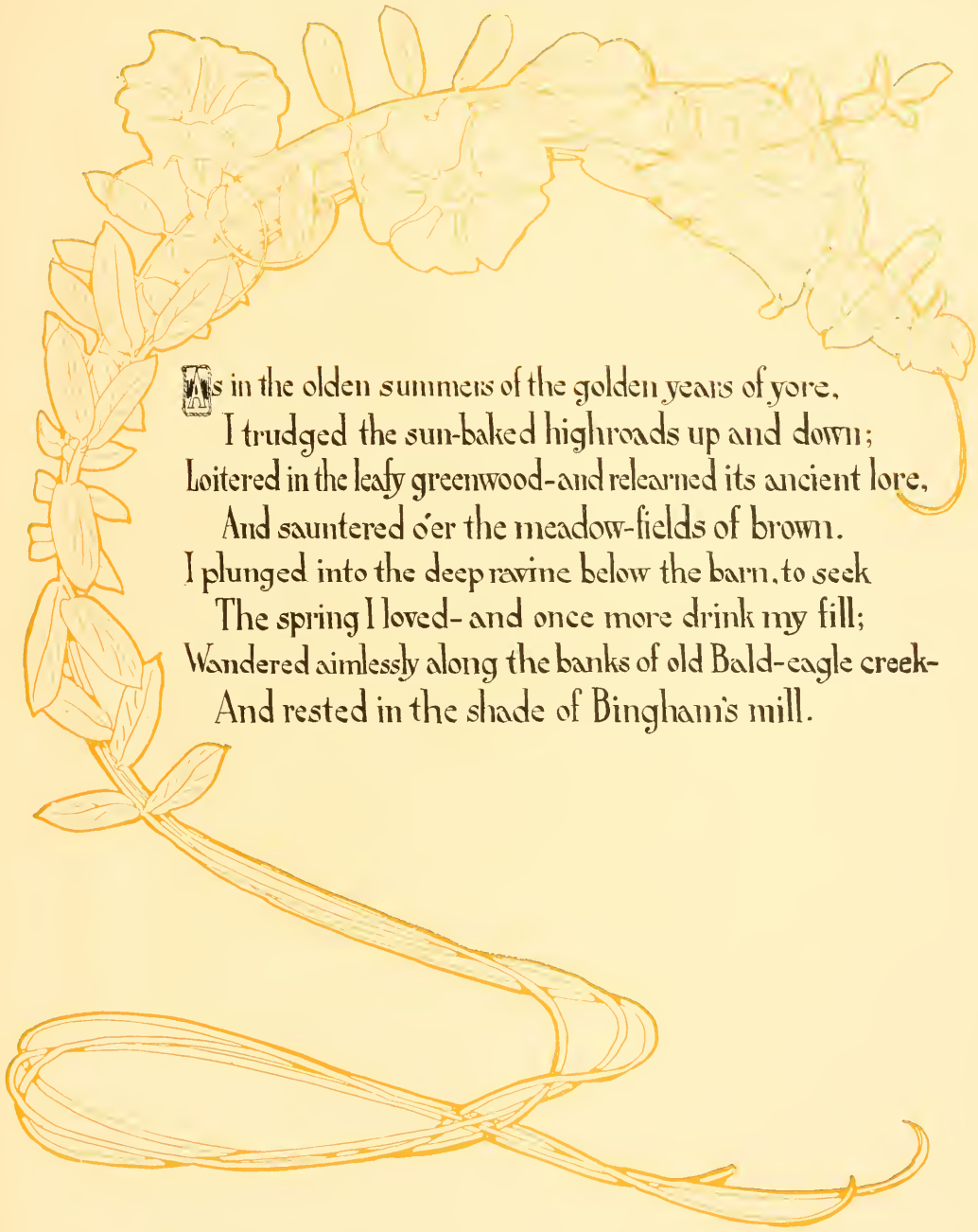


Then the games we played! The noise we made at tag and blind-man's-buff.
Hide-and-seek, and skip-the-rope, and pris'ner's-base,
Woke the echoes of the woodland; and sounded loud enough
To rouse the dozing dryads of the place.
Shorty Donaldson, in some way, tangled up his legs and fell–
The same old Shorty!– sprawling on the turf;
And Tim Hardin, captain of the good ship Bonnie Belle,
Gave a sailor shout that thundered like the surf!

A jolly, heedless boy was I for one whole happy week!
Cuddled close to Mother Earth's warm breast again,
I bent my ear to catch the words of wisdom she might speak–
And forgot the vaunted vanities of men,
O'er the well-known hills I rambled, climbed the well-remembered trees;–
Grown to double size since I observed them last!–
Swung and teetered with the sunbeams, romped and rollicked with the breeze,
And sighed to see the rosy hours flit past!



THE CAPITOL, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND



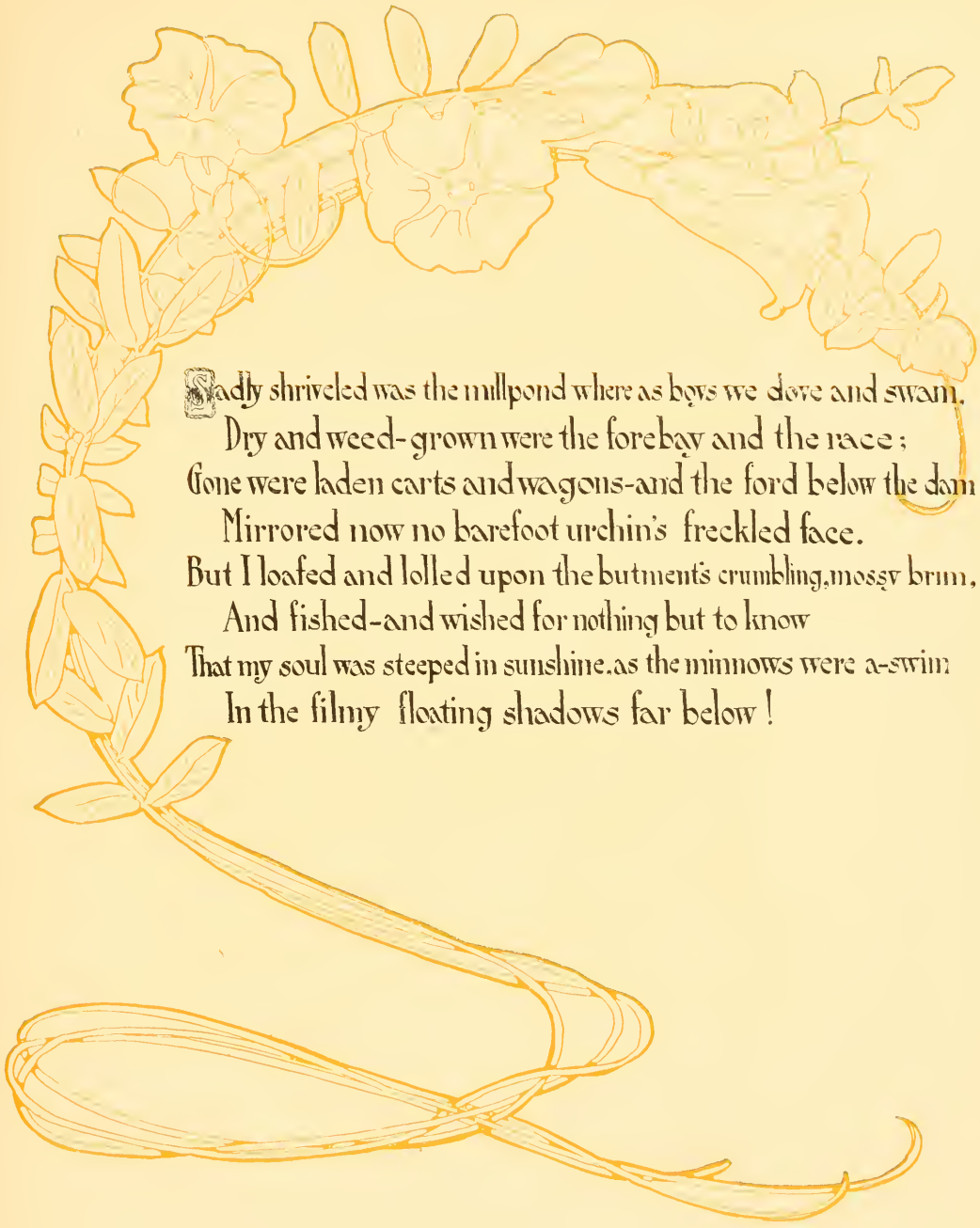
As in the olden summers of the golden years of yore,
I trudged the sun-baked highroads up and down;
Loitered in the leafy greenwood-and relearned its ancient lore,
And sauntered o'er the meadow-fields of brown.
I plunged into the deep ravine below the barn, to seek
The spring I loved- and once more drink my fill;
Wandered aimlessly along the banks of old Bald-eagle creek-
And rested in the shade of Bingham's mill.

ROGER WILLIAMS PARK, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

"BINGHAM'S MILL—A CRAZY RUIN!"

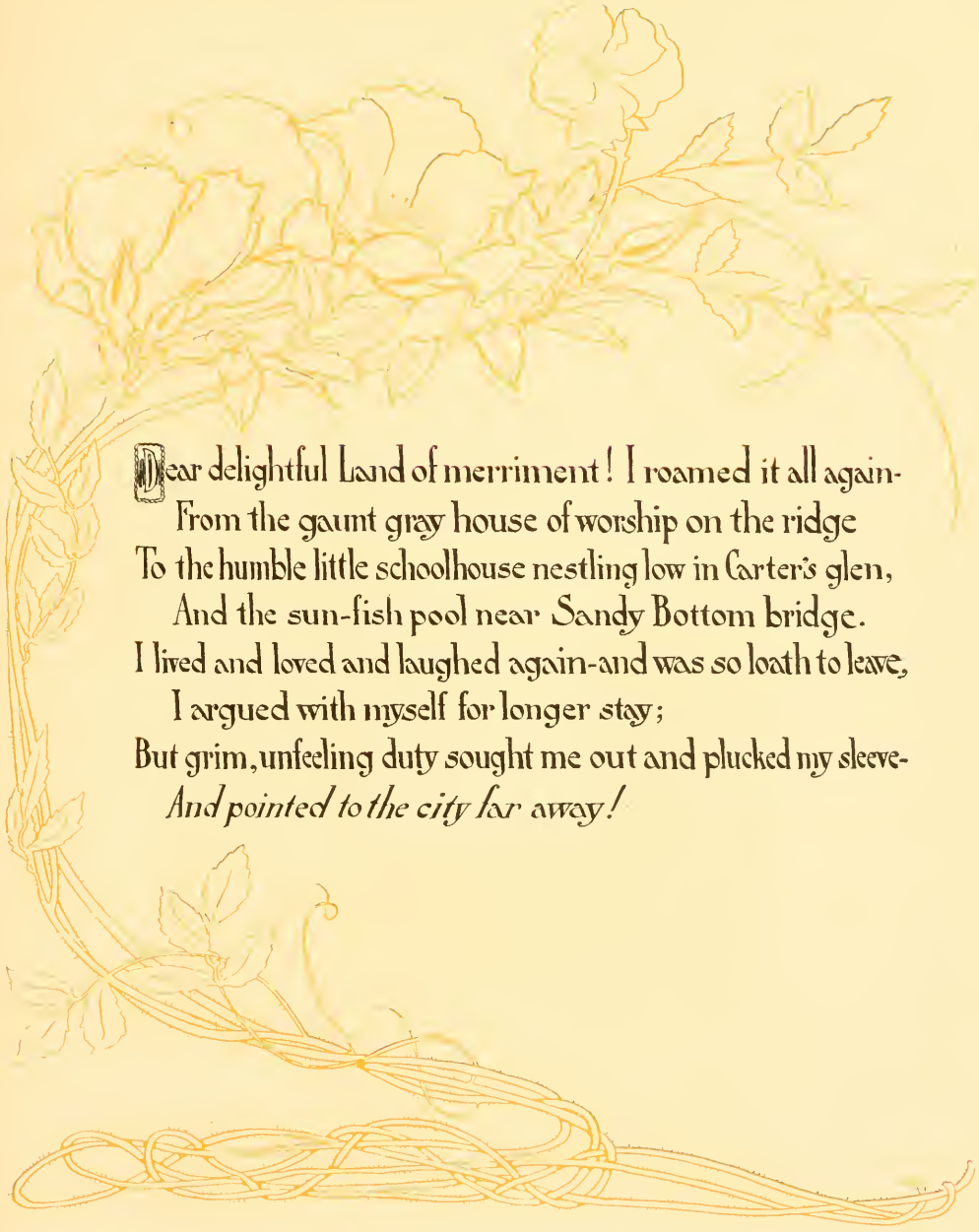
OLD MILL, NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS

Bingham's mill-a crazy ruin! Through the doorway yawning wide,
Crept the lazy breeze or swept the boist'rous blast;
From the broken, cobwebbed windows peeped a spirit somber-eyed-
The spirit of the dead and buried past!
And the whirring burrs were silent,-lost their busy, buzzing song
And the wheel was idly dabbling in the stream.
While the murmur of the water as it softly lipped along,
Was the music of a long-forgotten dream!



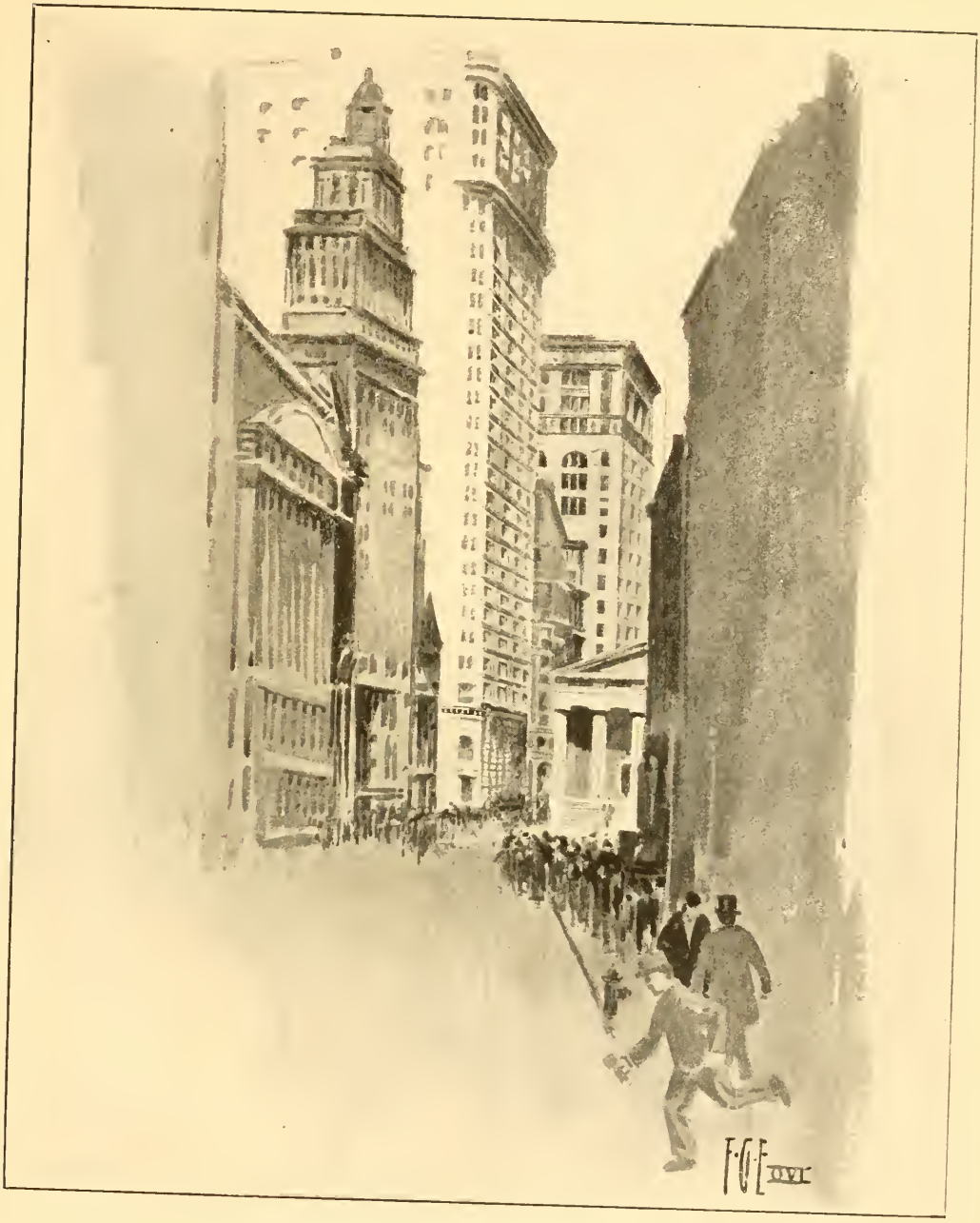
Sadly shriveled was the millpond where as boys we dove and swam.
Dry and weed-grown were the forebay and the race;
Gone were laden carts and wagons-and the ford below the dam
Mirrored now no barefoot urchin's freckled face.
But I loafed and lolled upon the butment's crumbling, mossy brim,
And fished-and wished for nothing but to know
That my soul was steeped in sunshine, as the minnows were a-swim
In the filmy floating shadows far below!

VIEW OF OLD BRIDGE AND RIVER AT WISCASSETT, MAINE



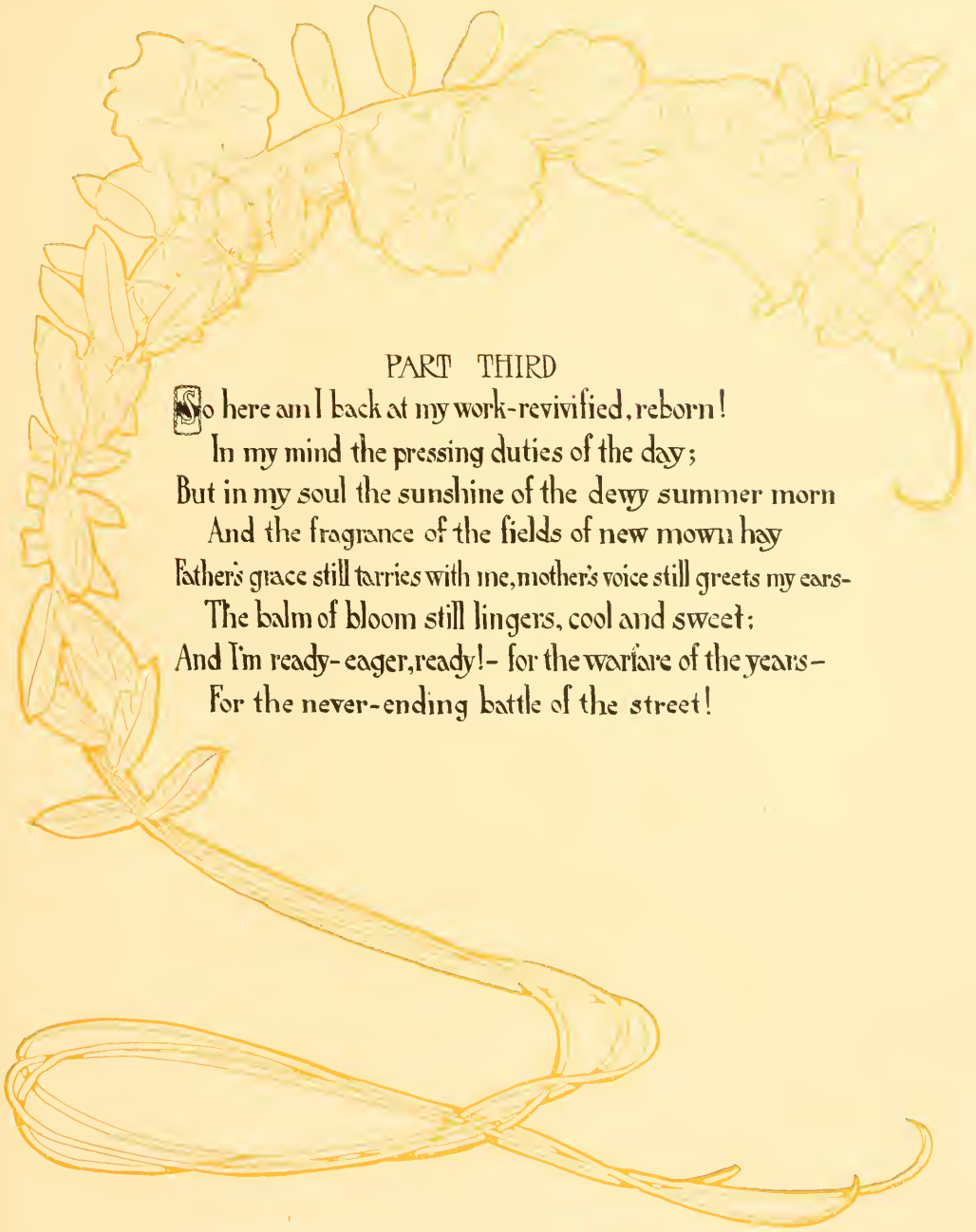
Dear delightful Land of merriment! I roamed it all again-
From the gaunt gray house of worship on the ridge
To the humble little schoolhouse nestling low in Carter's glen,
And the sun-fish pool near Sandy Bottom bridge.
I lived and loved and laughed again-and was so loath to leave,
I argued with myself for longer stay;
But grim, unfeeling duty sought me out and plucked my sleeve-
And pointed to the city far away!

INTERIOR OF FORT CONSTITUTION, NEWCASTLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE



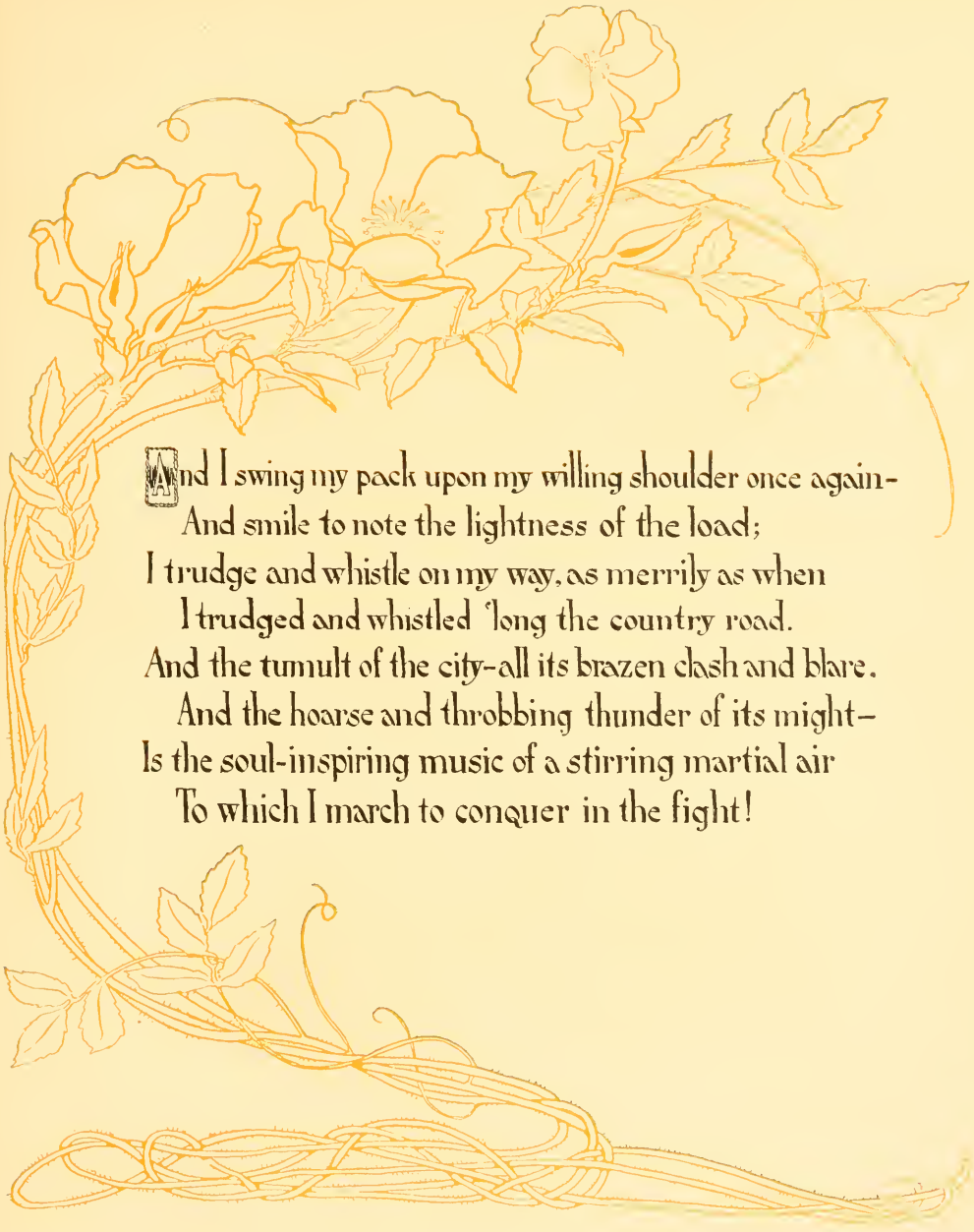
"NEVER-ENDING BATTLE OF THE STREET!"

THE CRAIGIE HOUSE, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
Home of Longfellow's later years and where he died



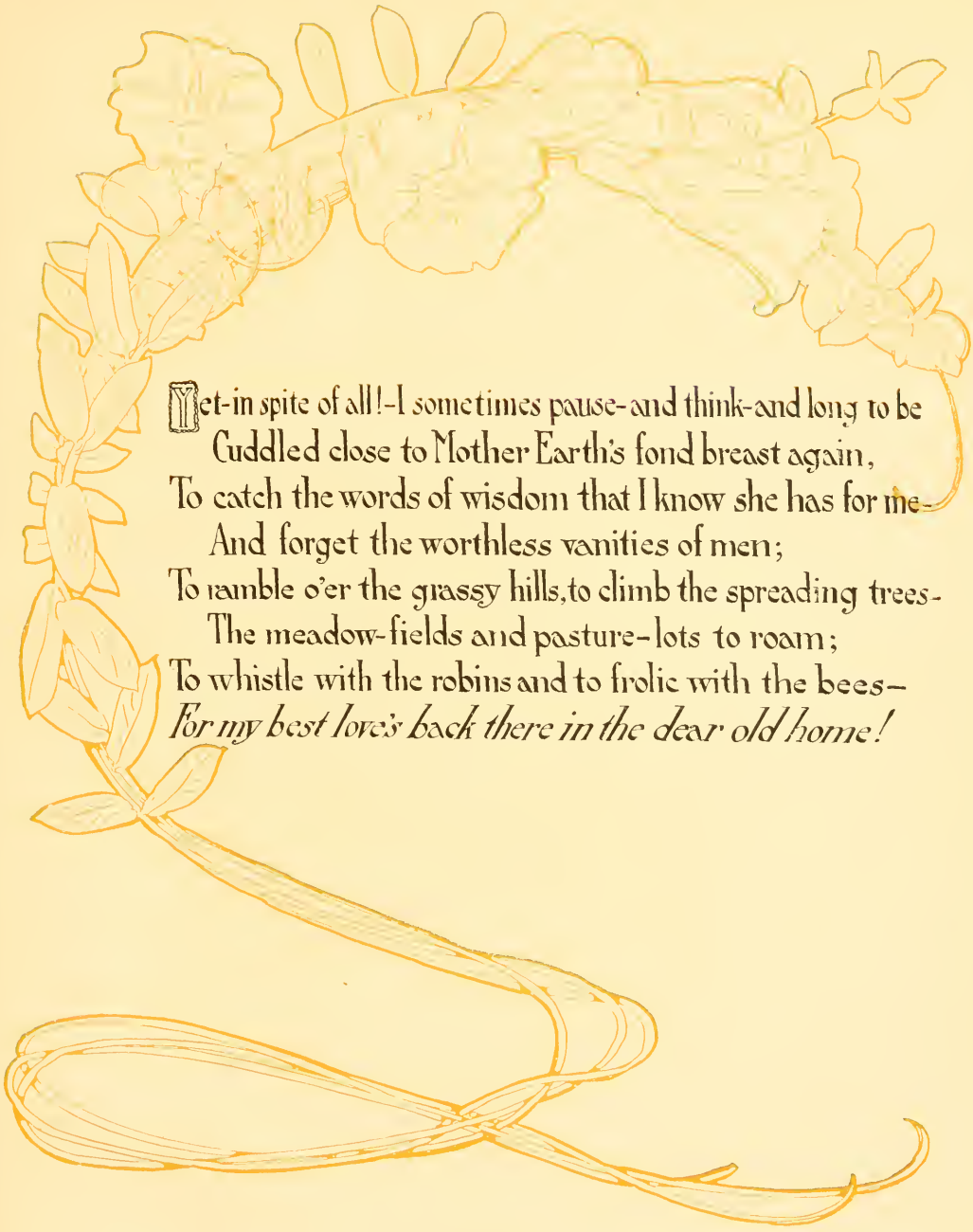
PART THIRD

So here am I back at my work-revivified, reborn!
In my mind the pressing duties of the day;
But in my soul the sunshine of the dewy summer morn
And the fragrance of the fields of new mown hay
Father's grace still tarries with me, mother's voice still greets my ears-
The balm of bloom still lingers, cool and sweet;
And I'm ready- eager, ready!- for the warfare of the years-
For the never-ending battle of the street!



And I swing my pack upon my willing shoulder once again–
And smile to note the lightness of the load;
I trudge and whistle on my way, as merrily as when
I trudged and whistled 'long the country road.
And the tumult of the city–all its brazen clash and blare.
And the hoarse and throbbing thunder of its might–
Is the soul-inspiring music of a stirring martial air
To which I march to conquer in the fight!

HOME OF ADMIRAL DEWEY, MONTPELIER, VERMONT



Yet-in spite of all!-I sometimes pause-and think-and long to be
Cuddled close to Mother Earth's fond breast again,
To catch the words of wisdom that I know she has for me-
And forget the worthless vanities of men;
To ramble o'er the grassy hills, to climb the spreading trees-
The meadow-fields and pasture-lots to roam;
To whistle with the robins and to frolic with the bees-
For my best love's back there in the dear old home!

OLD PROVINCETOWN, CAPE COD, MASSACHUSETTS

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